This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

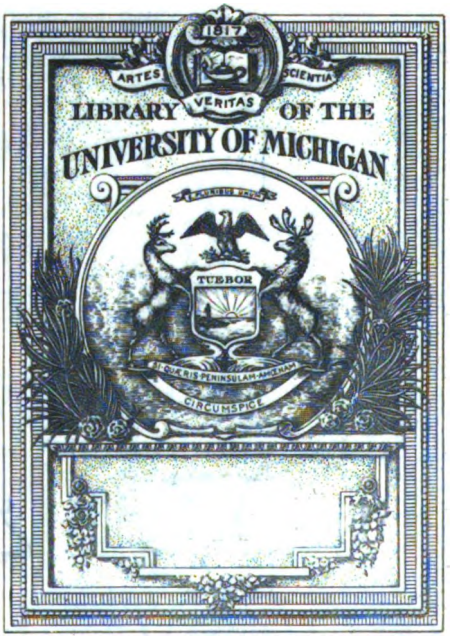
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



THE GIFT OF
Mr. John S. Tennant

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MASTER OF MILLIONS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MASTER OF MILLIONS

A NOVEL

By
George C. Lorimer

New York Chicago Toronto
Fleming H. Revell Company
London and Edinburgh

Digitized by Google

Copyright, 1903, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
(*June*)

Entered at Stationers' Hall, all rights reserved

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 63 Washington Street
Toronto: 27 Richmond Street, W
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 30 St. Mary Street

Digitized by Google

Affectionately Dedicated

to

My Three Daughters,

Martha, Edith, May

Digitized by Google

"Too often the man who wears a shabby coat is subjected to discourtesy. But I have observed that many a tattered garment hides a package of bonds and that gorgeous clothing does not always cover a millionaire."

The late GEORGE G. WILLIAMS,
President The Chemical Bank, N. Y. City.

Digitized by Google

Gift
John S. Tennant
11-5-28.

Contents

THE PROLOGUE

I. WIDOW MACGILLIVRAY AND THE MIDNIGHT MYSTERY 13

II. THE ROMANTIC LOVE OF DAWNEY MACGILLIVRAY 31

III. A FAMILY HISTORY AND THE FLIGHT OF THE INNOCENT 41

IV. THE DELIGHTS AND THE DANGERS OF TIGER BAY 54

V. WHAT CAME OF DAWNEY'S TEMPESTUOUS VOYAGE 70

THE DRAMA

I. IN WHICH A CURIOUS CHARACTER APPEARS 85

II. THE LODGING HOUSE ON GOWER STREET, 96

III. PREPARATIONS FOR A DISTINGUISHED GUEST 107

Digitized by Google

IV. PITSLIGO TYSFORD SAILS FOR THE OLD WORLD 118

V. THE "SOVEREIGN QUEEN" COMES SAFE TO PORT 128

VI. THE CROOKED PATHS FIONA MADE . . 143

VII. FIONA SEEKS REFUGE IN THE WILDERNESS 157

VIII. ON THE ROAD TO OAK HILL HALL . . 172

IX. REGAINING THE LOST PARADISE OF RESPECTABILITY 185

X. INCIDENTS OF A THREE DAYS' VISIT . 202

XI. DICK GOWANLOCK FINDS LUCRATIVE EMPLOYMENT 221

XII. ENTERTAINING AN ANGEL UNAWARES, 233

XIII. BITTER MEMORIES OF OTHER DAYS . . 251

XIV. MIDNIGHT SHADOWS AND WHAT CAME OF THEM 267

XV. A MORNING WITH GATHERING CLOUDS, 277

XVI. THE INHUMANITY OF MAN TO WOMAN, 291

Digitized by Google

XVII. THE UNCONSECRATED BISHOP OF BETHNAL GREEN 304

XVIII. TINA QUACO BECOMES A LADY OF QUALITY 326

XIX. TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A MILLIONAIRE 344

XX. UNEXPECTED TRACES OF A FORGOTTEN CRIME 359

XXI. "A REPROACH OF MEN AND DESPISED" 372

XXII. WHAT CAME OF A VISIT TO IVERNIA COTTAGE 385

XXIII. THE WISE WAYS OF A SORDID WORLD, 396

XXIV. A JEALOUS WOMAN'S RUTHLESS VENGEANCE 412

XXV. ROWALLAN REMEMBERS THE RESOURCES OF SCIENCE 428

XXVI. ALL FOR THE LOVE OF A WOMAN . 443

XXVII. THE FATAL FEAST ON CHRISTMAS EVE 461

XXVIII. TINA QUACO ATTAINS TO A BETTER HERITAGE 478

Digitized by Google

XXIX. MITCHIE IN SPITE OF HIMSELF BECOMES A HERO 497

XXX. HIDDEN THINGS OF DARKNESS BROUGHT TO LIGHT 517

XXXI. THE COLLAPSE OF THE EMANCIPATOR BUBBLE 534

THE EPILOGUE

I. THE PERILS OF A WANDERER AND A GATHERER 555

II. DEATH DIVIDES NOT WHAT LOVE UNITES 573

Digitized by Google

I. THE PROLOGUE

" For aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

I

WIDOW MACGILLIVRAY AND THE MIDNIGHT MYSTERY

MISTS, mists turning into rain and then returning into mists, a kind of rainy fog or a foggy rain, enveloped and saturated the ancient city of Edinburgh from the Firth of Forth to the Pentland Hills, and penetrated the homes and clothing of its worthy and unworthy burghers.

One o'clock in the morning sounded asthmatically from the tower of St. Giles Church, and was slowly ratified by a wheezy response from the bell of the gray Tron Kirk. The mournful echo died away over the castle rock and around old Holyrood, and the citizens who had been aroused from their slumbers by the doleful clang pulled their nightcaps farther down and sank deeper into their feather-beds, as though to shut out from hearing and from thought the drizzling, and bedraggled night.

A young man, scarce twenty-three years of age, carefully wrapped in a riding cloak, dashed rapidly across St. Andrew's Square and sought the shadows of a narrow street. He plunged into a tortuous labyrinth of lanes and alleys and reached a gloomy space bordered on two sides by tall, dreary buildings, as forbidding and uncomfortable as stone could make them, and bounded in the rear by a wall which led to another thoroughfare on a higher level, and which was reached by a flight of steps well worn by the busy feet of more than one generation of happy, dirty children.

The youth throughout his hurried flight had been hotly pursued, if anything could be hotly done in such chill and beastly weather, and now for a moment paused ir-

Digitized by Google

resolute. Noises in the neighbourhood convinced him that he had not yet made good his escape. And though he could barely see them for the darkness, he saw enough to realize that men were already on the wall turning the full glare of searching bull's-eye lanterns into the depths below, while two others in the opposite direction were emerging from a whitewashed close which led to the rear entrance of the Adelphi Theatre. Escape on either side was impossible. Both outlets were effectually guarded.

The fugitive however preserved his equanimity, and with the feverish calmness of the gamester who stakes everything on a final throw, crossed the threshold of the nearest house, climbed the narrow unlighted spiral stairway, always open to the public, and arriving at the first landing boldly inserted a skeleton key in the lock. He softly pushed aside the yielding door and stealthily entered a modest flat. Cautiously securing the door and putting his back against it, he drew a skean-dhu and listened.

And he heard.

He heard the officers ascend and descend the stairs, and he heard them, as they came and went, breathing rage against the rogue who had given them the slip. But in a little while all sounds died into silence, except the unmusical snoring of a woman in an adjoining chamber, by whose bed there flared a lighted tallow candle, which brought into obscure relief her form and an open Bible which she had been reading when she fell asleep.

The eyes of the young man turned towards her, and then, looking curiously about, he somehow felt that the place was not strange to him, and that once before he had stood within its walls. He began to tax his memory. What could have brought him there at any former time? Where was the house located?

In his mind he retraced his steps from St. Andrew's Square, when the alarm was given and the flight began, and recalled the crooked way he had pursued, and when in his review he reached his final halt, a gleam of intelli-

Digitized by Google

gence broke over his handsome face, and he muttered to himself:

"My stars! this must be No. 3, North St. James Street, and this must be the abode of the late Deacon Brodie Macgillivray, whose funeral I attended a week ago, and this can be no other than his disconsolate relict Sibilla. But where can Dawney and his little sister, Zinnia, be?"

The lamented Macgillivray had been a much respected man in his time. His career, however, had been overshadowed by two calamitous dignities. He was born the very year and month in which the famous Robert Burns passed from among the children of men; and he had been permitted on two occasions to see the great Sir Walter Scott. These exalted and intoxicating honours had proven too much for the worthy deacon, and he had formed the habit of celebrating them too frequently and with too unqualified a devotion to Highland whiskey.

When about thirty years of age he had entered the service of Angus, Duke of Kincardine, a nobleman of strong Jacobite sympathies, whose grandfather had been mixed up with the movement of 1745 on behalf of the Pretender, and whose aim had been to restore to his house some of the broad acres which in those evil days had been confiscated by the Hanoverian usurpers. Brodie, not yet a deacon, speedily established himself in the good graces of his employer, and was promoted to be factor of the duke's estates. In this position he continued until 1847, when his ever-increasing love of whiskey compelled his patron to dispense with his services.

But the Duke, in the kindness of his heart, still did what he could to help the family. But, notwithstanding this friendly interposition, poverty domesticated itself in the home of Deacon Macgillivray; and to add to his mortification the Kirk Session suspended him from office, and as though to crush him yet more and more, his wife, Sibilla, presented him with a daughter five years before the end came. Only one son had survived the other children, and the good Duke had seen to it that Dawney should not come to man's estate without a fair educa-

Digitized by Google

tion. When the tiny girl arrived, however, the father was overwhelmed by the extent of his misfortunes. He had a hazy notion that he had been wronged, and that the members of his household were leagued against him. Soon after the birth of Zinnia, his circumstances compelled him to find an humbler abode, and there Deacon Brodie Macgillivray died in the early autumn of 1852.

With his demise the veil of charity, which is kept ready for such purposes, was drawn, like the shroud over his remains, above the sad transgressions of his wayward life, and his neighbours tucked it in carefully so that nothing should be exposed, doubtless realizing that by and by some one would have to perform for most of them the same benevolent office. The funeral arrangements were modest but eminently respectable, and, thanks to the generosity of the Duke who paid all the bills, the solemnities were not devoid of the cake, wine and whiskey which Scottish mourners of that day regarded as indispensable in times of bereavement, and without which bereavements would seem to have been intolerable.

Elisheba MacTavish, an expert in mortuary affairs, who had been present at the obsequies of more lamented individuals than any other woman, and whose religious scruples prevented her from attending the tragic drama, pronounced the funeral of Deacon Macgillivray a credit to the taste of the living, and one that ought to be a solace to the dead. The ancient, trusty, drouthy cronies of the departed recalled his many excellent qualities, and wept over him such tears as are distilled from the memories of "bold John Barleycorn."

Sibilla, while fairly intelligent, and gifted in no small degree with sturdy Scottish common sense, knew nothing of the changes that were taking place in the religious world, and still lived in the mystical realm of her childhood, a realm in which ghosts, hobgoblins, and demons from the pit were every-day disturbers of the peace, and over which a Deity presided whose breath was hot with vengeance, and whose thunderbolts were perpetually distracting and dishevelling the wits of poor humanity.

Digitized by Google

With the return of night these ghoulish fancies became to her more real and palpable; and with the demise of her husband they had pitilessly invaded her sleep and crowded the chambers of the soul with the blood-curdling presence of hideous, unshapely Belials, Ahrimans, bogies, wraiths and flibbertigibbets. It was from just such harrowing and appalling visions that she was suddenly aroused by the vague consciousness that some one was gazing on her from the threshold of her chamber.

Realizing that the woman was wide awake, and that she might raise an inconvenient alarm, the intruder, still wrapped as carefully as possible in his cloak, stepped quickly to her bedside, and in an imperative undertone commanded silence.

"Eh," she whispered, "and is it you?"

"What," he replied in evident alarm and shame, "do you know me?" And then becoming more impetuously urgent, he continued, "Come, I insist upon an answer. My honour, my liberty, depend on what you say. Speak! speak! do you know me?"

Sibilla contemplated for a few moments the muffled figure, as it stood dark before her in the uncertain light of the flickering candle, and while a cold shiver went over her, murmured, "Ay, why should I no ken ye?"

"And will you faithfully keep my secret?" he asked, little dreaming of what was passing through the mind of the widow.

"Ay, if ye dinna work me ony evil," she replied.

"Hush," answered the man, and taking the Bible which lay conveniently near, he added, "you must swear on the sacred book that you will never tell any one that you saw me here—swear!"

"I swear!" she uttered shiveringly.

"It is well," he responded. "Do not be alarmed. I only desire to escape detection, and if you are true to me no evil that I can avert shall overtake you." She shuddered. "In the meanwhile to prove my gratitude, and knowing your present needs, I place in the Bible this

Digitized by Google

five-pound note." As he suited the action to the word, the widow groaned in unspeakable terror, and, drawing the bedclothes over her head, in smothered accents plead that she might not be compelled to make a compact with the Wicked One, which could only end in the ruin of her soul.

Either the unbidden guest did not hear her words, or in the excitement of the moment failed to comprehend their drift, for he paid no attention to them, and prepared with the utmost caution to depart.

The skeleton key was still in the lock on the inside of the door where he had placed it when he escaped from his pursuers. He now, having unfastened the door, removed it, gently inserted it on the outside, and circumspectly and softly crept from the house.

His flight, however, was rudely interrupted. Scarcely had he turned the key, and before he had had time to remove it from the lock, when a sturdy form that had been concealed two or three steps above the landing leading to the next ascent, laid violent hands on him, and a voice cried out: "And I've got ye, have I, ye marauder, ye rogue, ye villain!"

A fierce struggle ensued in the darkness. The men grappled viciously and struck at one another, and swayed to and fro, as they tried to cast each other down the stairs. They breathed hard and they fought desperately, but while the newcomer was loud in his denunciations, and in his calls for help, the fugitive was sternly and grimly silent. Shrieks within the widow's home gave evidence that the disturbance might lead to unpleasant consequences for one of the battlers. This was not unperceived or unappreciated by the young man who was anxious to be gone, and freeing a skean-dhu from his watch-fob he whispered hoarsely in the ear of his assailant, as they were reeling in a mad embrace: "Let me go or I'll dirk you!"

Something in the intensity of tone, and perhaps a scratch from a sharp instrument, startled his foe, and his clutch for the moment relaxed. Before he could

Digitized by Google

recover it, the fugitive had plunged down the stairway, and had passed out of the house into the drizzly rain, into the slippery, miry streets, into the blackness of the night. His antagonist, recovering himself, turned to give pursuit, but as he moved, his foot caught in some soft object on the landing, and he stumbled down several steps. There he lay panting, bruised, and cursing his luck; and when he was able to pull himself together, it was only to realize that he stood no chance of overtaking his supple and swift-footed opponent.

Groping round he discovered that he had been ignominiously tripped by a cloak, which must have fallen from the shoulders of his adversary in the hurry of retreat. This he threw loosely round his person and ascended to the widow's flat. In the door he found the abandoned skeleton key. He opened the door, and having secured it, he placed the singular looking instrument in his pocket, and then as he turned he saw by the aid of the candle's yet unexpired flame the terror-stricken relict of the late Deacon Macgillivray hysterically clasping in her arms the astounded and affrighted Zinnia, who, roused by the shrieks of her mother, had flown to her for protection. The newcomer advanced towards the trembling figures that he might reassure them, but before he had had a chance to say a word, the widow surprised him by exclaiming:

"An' can ye no leave us alane? What hae brought ye back again?"

"Again!" echoed the man.

"Ay, ye were here just the noo in your lang black cloak, doubtless hiding your cloven hoof."

"Why, mither, dinna ye ken your ain flesh and blude? Dinna ye ken your laddie, Dawney? Why, wha' d'ye tak' me for?"

"Tak' ye for! eh, wha can tell? Ye speak maist like Dawney, but hoo am I to ken that ye are nae Satan appearing as an angel of licht?"

"How?" replied Dawney. And then letting the cloak slip from his back, and holding the candle so that

Digitized by Google

its rays could reveal his face, he continued: "See, mither, I'm neither wraith nor demon, nor angel either. It's yer ain Dawney. Dawney wha has walked a' the way frae Eskburgh through slush and rain—six miles and mair—and wha met on the threshold o' his hame a ruffian hastening to get awa', and wha frae the feel o' him was nae mair a ghaist or devil than himsel'. Do ye no mind, mither, that I tauld ye that I wanted to see the duke, and that I wadna' get back till late? Weel, the muddy roads made it slow and heavy walking, and the clock was half-past one before I entered the street. I climbed the stairs, and when I reached the door I heard some one turning the lock. Wha could it be? In a moment I slipped aside and ascended twa or three steps of the next flight from our landing, and, then, as God is my judge, I saw a man come out o' our house, and I just grappled wi' him, and we put up a stiff bit o' a fight thegither. But he was o'er nimble for me, and got awa' frae me, and left me sprained and sprawling on the cauld stane stairs, and noo, after a', when I hae dune my best to guard the honour o' my kin, my puir daft mither disna' ken me and clavers aboot my being a bogie, a deil, and, what's mair awfu' still, an angel o' licht."

The time consumed in this remonstrance, and the tones of a familiar voice went far towards restoring composure to the widow, and when tiny Zinnia, having gravely listened, cried aloud—"Eh, Dawney, brither, ye'll no let the Black Man wi' the tail and horns tak' me awa' "—she also had sufficiently regained her senses to recognize her beloved son.

Important was it now for Dawney to search the house. He desired to ascertain how far a robbery had been committed. Nothing had been taken or disturbed. The door key even was in its place where it was usually hung after the locking of the door; for by this arrangement the men of the family, having a duplicate, could let themselves in when returning home late at night. It was owing to this customary precaution that the young fugitive was able with so much ease to obtain an entrance.

Digitized by Google

The examination was carried to a satisfactory conclusion, and Dawney returned to his mother's room and sat down by her bedside.

"Weel, my lad," she asked, "and how did the uncanny veesitor get in, think ye?"

"By the door, of course," he answered.

"Are ye sure it wasna' through the keyhole?"

"Mither," answered Dawney, "what blether is this? To hear ye talk ye wad mak' believe our house to be a kind o' warlock-knowes, smelling o' brimstane, wi' Hornie himsel' as principal inhabitant, and wi' nae ither business in hand than to bewilder ye wi' his cantrips."

"And is it my ain bairn that says his mither is bletherin'?" the widow exclaimed with some spirit; and then she added with a touch of asperity in her voice, "Have ye gane sae far frae the faith o' yer forbears as to question the very existence o' Satan himsel'? Hech! But what can we expect o' a lad wha attends Chartist meetings and thinks himsel' amaist as wise as Solomon?"

Dawney, assuming more humility than he felt, replied, "Weel, mither, it is better for me no tae fash mysel' about sic high matters. But let us leave the deil out o' the question, for the chiel I grippit on the landing wrastled like a man, breathed like a man, ran awa' like a man, and used a queer-looking key to let himsel' in and oot o' our hame like a man."

As Dawney held up the garment and the burglarious instrument before his mother's eyes her confidence in her Satanic theory was shaken. She remained silent for a minute or two, and then, clutching at Zinnia who had cuddled close to her side, she gave a sudden start, as though a painful discovery had been made to her. In the paroxysm of her overwhelming surprise, half-rising from her recumbent position, she crooned: "My God, could it be, was it he?"

"Wha, mither? Wha do ye suspect?"

Hurriedly she answered, and yet in smothered accents: "Why, the young laird o' ———" But she did not complete her disclosure. A sickening faintness overcame

Digitized by Google

her and she sank back on her pillow trembling through and through, and moaning to herself—"My aith, my aith! I canna forswear mysel'."

"But mither, mither, what do ye mean?" now excitedly inquired her astonished son. "Ye're mair mysterious than ye were afore. Ye mak' me feel like a haveral. Syne it was Satan himsel', and noo it is a laird. I'm laith tae believe that ye're gane daft. But ye have suffered, I fear, some skaith in yer understanding, or ye wadna' be chittering about lairds breaking into our puir hame seeking plunder amang the plackless."

"Right ye are, my bairn, but your mither kens what she kens. She may be wrang, but she has been lippened an' she maun be feal tae her trust."

"But mither, ought ye no to tell me what has taken place in the house, and what it is that mak's ye sae ourie and foughten?"

Moved by her son's earnestness, the widow in her own way related what had occurred during the strange visit, and when winding up her account of the episode, without in the remotest manner hinting at her suspicions, she said: "An', gif ye look in the Bible ye'll find the bank note which the birkie or the warlock, or whatever he was, placed there for our present needs."

Dawney promptly obeyed the suggestion, and sure enough the five pound note was there in the sacred volume as described, looking as innocent and as inviting as bank notes can look. The youth lit a fresh candle that he might inspect it more carefully, and as though to scrutinize its genuineness. And as he stood with the paper in his hand the widow watched anxiously, and when he had folded it up and was about to put it into his pocket, she cried out, her superstitious fears again getting the better of her:

"You maun burn that money. I'll no eat o' the bread or drink o' the drink it brings, nor shall you."

Dawney was in every essential respect an honest youth, though in common with many his seniors in years, it must be confessed that he regarded honesty as a relative

Digitized by Google

and not as an absolute virtue. To be more honest than others was the highest commendation he had ever heard, and he rather surmised that honesty in the positive degree was an obsolete term in the grammar of human conduct. Then, whoever could see much moral turpitude in deceiving parents, or in filching from them, unless, perhaps, the parents themselves, with unpardonable forgetfulness of their own adolescence, grew unreasonably virtuous and pronounced anathemas on their light-fingered offspring? Dawney was not old enough to have fallen a victim to morbid scruples, and though he would have starved rather than have put his hand in his neighbour's pocket, he did not see any harm in quietly evading his mother's commands, especially as the money was sorely needed. Therefore, he bustled pretentiously about the chamber, as though making preparation for the burnt offering, and then with shameless dexterity, he substituted another piece of paper for the note, and held it gloatingly over the flame until it had disappeared in smoke.

"Mither," said the arch-conspirator, "ye maun be unnerved by this night's mischanters, and I mysel' am feelin' upset at the mixtie-maxtie I hae had to do wi', and it will no hurt either of us gif we gang awhile to sleep. The morn I'm thinkin' isna' far aff, an' I'm laith that it sud find me out o' bed."

Wearied, indeed, the good woman was. The strain upon her strength had been excessive, and she was ready through sheer exhaustion to follow the counsel of her son. She composed herself as best she could, and began to address an inaudible prayer to Deity, in the midst of which holy exercise slumber overtook her as it so frequently does those who engage in sacred meditations.

Dawney, who had listened through the half-open door for the welcome signs that sleep had conquered, was reassured by his mother's heavy breathing interrupted by occasional and emphatic snores. He softly pulled to the door, examined once more his five pound note, secured it safely in his waistcoat and put his waistcoat under his pillow, and then, extinguishing his candle which had be-

Digitized by Google

come ominously disfigured by a tallow winding-sheet, was soon lulled to slumber by the music of a good conscience within and the melancholy pattering of the raindrops without.

It was a late hour when the humble dwellers in North St. James Street opened their eyes on the new day. They all gave evidence of the strain they had been under the night before, and languidly went about their household duties. When the meagre morning meal of unpalatable drummock had been eaten, the widow, still haunted by tormenting fears, shut herself up with poor Zinnia and gave herself to much reading of the Bible and prolonged prayer. Dinner was forgotten. Dawney had remained indoors with his books, occasionally gloating over his treasure and uncertain how to act. But now he was beginning to feel the gnawings of hunger and intruded on his mother's privacy. Just as he did so an authoritative knock sounded on the door, and two men pushed it open and stepped inside the house. Their dress and their manner unmistakably announced police officials.

The widow was the first to speak: "Ye'll no be lookin' for ony man beneath this roof?"

Paying no attention to her question, the officer proceeded to propound another, after the custom of the Scotch, who will carry on an entire conversation in negatives, and whose denials are generally to be taken as polite and euphemistic affirmations.

Queried the officer, the well-known Etal Oran, as his eyes rested on Dawney: "Ye're no Dawney Macgillivray, are ye?"

"Yes, I am though," answered that youth, "and what then?"

"Well," continued Oran, measuring his words, and apparently permitting them to escape only as he would convicts after due examination of the release papers, "it's an ugly business. Aiblins ye ken naething o' the robbery that has been committed on the premises of Sir Murchison Carfrae a wee bit beyond St. Andrew's

Digitized by Google

Square?" Dawney good-naturedly admitted his deplorable ignorance. "An'," further inquired Mr. Oran, "ye'll no hae heard that late last night when a few military folk wha had been taking supper wi' Captain Raeburn Carfrae an' had lost muckle siller tae him o'er the cards had gane awa' tae the Castle, some mislear'd reaver broke into the house and carried awa' over five hundred pounds, maist in notes, but some in gowd?"

"No, I hae heard naething aboot the crime," responded Dawney, "an' I dinna see what on earth I hae tae do wi' the story."

The officer, without commenting on the petulance observable in Dawney's voice, deliberately added: "Are ye meaning to say that ye hae nae knowledge that the callant maun hae entered the house wi' a skeleton key, an' that he just creepit up-stairs tae the captain's room, an' groped his way tae the bed an' pu't the money frae under the pillow, and when the young captain loup'd up an' seized him by the thrapple he inflicted a sma' wound wi' a skean-dhu, and then hurried frae the house as he had entered it?"

"Naething, naething," declared Dawney in return. "A' this is news tae me."

"An' ye'll be saying that it is news tae ye that he was warpped in a dark cloak, an' that when the officers of the law got on his heels that he gave them the slip in North St. James Street; and then, maybe, ye'll be saying that ye did no yersel' reach hame towards the sma' hours o' the mornin'? We spotted the house last nicht, an' we've speered at the neighbours, and they say ye are aften awa' when honest folks are in bed."

Mother and son needed no further speech to explain the situation and its gravity, but both were stupefied. Poor little Zinnia, understanding nothing, and yet with a child's instinctive feeling that evil threatened the loved ones of her home, buried her face in her mother's gown and sobbed. The officer stepped up and said to Dawney in an undertone: "Ye are under arrest, and I am ordered to search you and the house."

Digitized by Google

Oran and his associate immediately began investigating the small rooms that made up the modest dwelling, and examined the person of the prisoner. They discovered in Dawney's pocket the skeleton key, and a crumpled piece of paper that proved to be a five pound note, and the subordinate officer exclaimed:

"Here's the key, an' the cloak is yonder; but I havena' been able tae find ony o' the swag, except this fiver."

Immediately Dawney cried out:—"Why mon, that's the key I found in the door when I cam' hame frae Eskburgh last night." And then as though realizing the childishness of the explanation, and perceiving the hardly suppressed sneer of incredulity on the face of Etal Oran, he lapsed into sullen silence. But not so his mother. She argued gravely and painfully with the officers, insisting that she had been visited the night before in an extraordinary way, and reiterating once more the story of the money and the oath. Oran, becoming a trifle impatient, answered her:—

"Then if you took an oath not to betray, ye must hae kenned wha yer unwelcome guest was. Wha is it, woman? Tell us, an' we'll hae him under arrest afore ye can say Jock Robinson."

"But my aith, man, my aith!"

"I hae naething tae do wi' that. Ane aboon a' maun judge that. A' I ken is that we have the proofs o' yer son's guilt right here, specially the note whose number corresponds to one of the stolen notes. And remember, in keeping yer aith ye condemn him."

"But that's no the bill left here yester ene, is it, Dawney? Why I saw ye burn it and the reek gang up the lum. The Duke o' Kincardine maun hae gaed him that."

"Eh, mither," interposed Dawney. "Forgive me! the Duke gaed me nae siller. I played a silly trick on you an' made oot tae burn the note, and, and——" But he never finished the sentence. Mrs. Macgillivray all of a sudden seemed petrified, and speaking in icy, cutting tones, she said:

Digitized by Google

"An' ye deceived a puir auld woman, an' cam' a leein' tae the mither that bore ye. Ca' it what ye wull, tae honest folk what ye tauld me was a lee, an' naething but a lee, and the curse o' the Father o' Lees has come on ye. How do I ken but ye're a thief as well?"

"Mither!" indignantly replied Dawney, "ye ken by yer aith that I am nae thief. Nae thief, mither, as there is a God aboon, nae thief. For the deceit I am noo in the creepie-chair, an' I greet sairly tae hae grieved ye. I'm nae thief, an' I never wished tae wrang ony man or woman, an' never thocht of ony wrang tae ye."

Mrs. Macgillivray made no sign as though she heard. She stood still and cold like stone. One hand lay on the golden curls of Zinnia, and the other hung listlessly at her side. Her wrinkled face was stern and hard, and her lips wore an expression of contempt.

Etal Oran gently touched Dawney on the shoulder, and motioned to the door. Dazed to speechlessness the young man mechanically obeyed, and as soon as he had crossed the threshold found himself handcuffed and linked to the wrist of Oran's companion.

And thus these two parted the mother and son, with no tender embrace, no kiss of love, and with no lingering look of affection. Thus they parted with no kindly farewell words, and with no tokens of the sacred ties uniting them, a lock of hair, a bit of ribbon, or a faded flower to recall in other times or in far distant lands the memories of childhood's days. And thus have thousands parted abruptly, roughly, carelessly, bitterly, fiercely, forgetting that they have slept for years beneath the same roof, eaten at the same table, bowed together in prayer before the same God, and shared in the same family joys and sorrows. They separate from each other, and the paths diverge, diverge continuously, until they are as wide apart as the antipodes, and they who knew and loved become as strangers, caring no more for one another, thinking no more of one another—unless it may be that when at last the roads begin to converge again, as all roads do towards the quiet grave, the old faces

Digitized by Google

almost forgotten, and the old familiar scenes almost effaced, revive once more, a fair prophecy, perhaps, of reunited lives in the kingdom that lies beyond the golden sunsets and the gleaming stars.

A mighty tempest raged in Dawney's soul. His whole being was in a tumult. He said never a word and walked steadily enough, but within disorder and anger prevailed. Curious crowds had gathered in the sloppy street to see him depart, and while sympathetic words were spoken, there were not a few of the tattered and motley throng who indulged in gibes and taunts.

Dawney was a favourite in the neighbourhood. He was only twenty-four, tall, lithe, strong, and fearless in his ways. His head was crowned with a mass of yellow, wavy hair, not sandy coloured, but rather, like his sister's, soft and golden, such as would have become a Viking of the olden time. From deep blue eyes there constantly shone the light of sincerity, while his face, when in company was frequently illumined by radiant smiles. He was rarely boisterous or noisy, and yet no laugh was merrier than his. His independence made him popular with his young associates, but exposed him to the distrust of his seniors. Still, frankly he would have his say, though at times he would deeply regret his temerity, and would do penance for it by wandering by himself for hours on the lonely mountainside.

He brooded a good deal over his peasant origin. Not that he was ashamed of his uncultured hardy ancestry. No; far from that; and he frequently spoke in the dialect of Ayr, from whence his father and his mother came, for the sake of avowing his descent. He had been better taught than his parents, was fairly well educated, and his English was unusually excellent, but he rather abstained from that tongue lest his comrades should suppose he was ashamed of the stock from whence he sprang.

He knew, that the poor man's son was at a disadvantage, that society did not welcome from him suggestions or reproof, and that, while ready to patronize genius, as it did in the ploughman Burns, it resented with

Digitized by Google

bitter scorn the protests and the pleadings of the lowly children of toil. The consciousness of his humble origin depressed him, because it seemed to stand in the way of his advancement, and because when he could not resist the temptation to speak his mind it recalled him to a sense of his personal insignificance.

He often thought that he had been born to trouble as the sparks to fly upward. There was no doubt in his mind that, as he had brought nothing into the world, he would take nothing out, for the very good reason that he saw no signs of his earning anything while in it. As he contemplated his discouraging fortunes he mentally had drawn up a balance sheet of his life. It was somewhat crude, but it was sufficiently accurate for the purposes of pessimistic hopelessness. Had it been transcribed on paper it would have appeared in this way.

I HAVE:	I HAVE NOT:
A Scotch ancestry,	Money,
A mother and a sister,	Position,
A rash and impetuous temper,	Work,
Health enough and to spare,	Opportunity,
A presumptuous love.	Patrons.

Such reflections as these had imparted to his disposition a touch of cynicism, and now that vile-mouthed people were mocking him, and sympathetic souls were pitying and commiserating, thick blackness settled over him, the blackness of despair, and shame.

He heard nothing but the terms "liar," "thief." This to him was the meaning of each execration, and the purport of even every encouraging cry. Friends as well as foes, the one in gentle accents, the other in strident tones, were saying in common,—"liar," "thief"—this and nothing more. To him the whole city of Edinburgh was joined in a pandemonium of sound, the refrain of which was "liar" and "thief." The street vendors were shouting "liar" and "thief"; the children in their play were yelling to each other "liar" and "thief"; the heavy drays rumbled the accusation as they jolted over the cobble-stones; the omnibus drivers called it out to the

Digitized by Google

passers-by; the fishwomen with their empty kreels tramping wearily Newhaven-ward, having long since sold their "caller herrin'," took it up and passed it on; while a saluting gun on Castle Hill repeated it in its awful boom, echoing to Holyrood, from Holyrood to Arthur's Seat, and from Arthur's Seat over all the Pentland Hills—"liar and thief."

Digitized by Google

II

THE ROMANTIC LOVE OF DAWNEY MACGILLIVRAY

ALTHOUGH the widow Macgillivray was a saint she had a will of her own, a not uncommon circumstance among the saints, both men and women, particularly among those of the John Knox school. With the removal of her son by the officers the reaction commenced. From her condition of stony amazement she liquefied into tears, and from her tears, as from the vapours of the sea, there arose in her mind an angry cloud charged with threatening thunders against the authors of her disgrace. Her mother's heart naturally relented towards her boy, and he whom she had so swiftly judged and condemned, she was already seeking to exculpate.

Instinctively she fell upon her knees seeking supermundane wisdom. And she prayed, and she prayed, and she prayed; now silently, then audibly; now pleadingly, wooingly and entreatingly, then exhortingly, urgently and almost commandingly. And still she prayed and she prayed. It was late in the afternoon when she began, and she continued after the sun had gone done, and there is no telling when she would have paused had she not been interrupted by the childish voice of Zinnia.

The little one had been entirely overlooked. Puzzled by the drama she had witnessed without comprehending, the unnoticed bairnie had slipped away and joined merrier companions in the street. After a while, however, being tired by play and somewhat frightened by the deepening shadows, she ran back to the house and was about to climb the stairs when her attention was arrested by the flash of a gleaming object which

Digitized by Google

lay partly concealed in the rubbish which often collects in the hallways of the poorer Edinburgh tenements. She kicked it with her tiny foot, and then took it in her hand. It proved to be a small knife with a bright yellow stone inserted in the top of the haft. With noisy glee the child scampered up the flight of stairs, and oblivious to her mother's devotions, cried out as she entered the room: "See, mither, dear, what I hae foun', ain't it bonnie?"

The widow lifted up her head and saw in the hand of her child a skean-dhu, and straightway concluded that her intrusive visitor must have dropped it in his flight as it was altogether too valuable a weapon to be owned by any of her poor neighbours. What if its discovery was the beginning of God's answer to her prayers? This thought grew on the widow, and the more she entertained it the more reasonable it appeared. Musingly she rocked Zinnia on her knee, and gradually a plan of action unfolded, clear and definite.

The night passed slowly and sadly, and on the next morning Mrs. Macgillivray wrapped herself in her cheap Scotch shawl and set out on foot for Eskburgh. In other circumstances the journey would not have been burdensome, for the scenery towards the southeast of Edinburgh is not without a soothing charm, and the Esk is always restful. But Mrs. Macgillivray had no eyes for the beautiful on that mournful morning. She was too fully absorbed with her own grief to be diverted by mountainside or by bonnie stream. It was past the noon hour when she timidly knocked for admittance at the palace gates, the famous seat for generations of the Dukes of Kincardine.

The building rose before her, as she had often seen it, massive, baronial-looking, and rendered more picturesque by the ample park within whose enclosure it is situated. She experienced no difficulty in obtaining admission. The gillies of the Duke knew her, and received her respectfully. They informed her that it was doubtful whether his Grace could grant her an interview as he was

Digitized by Google

indisposed, and the infirmities of his many years prevented him from conversing to any extent with guests and friends. They would see, however. "Would she be so kind as to remain seated in the hall, and the housekeeper would gladly give her a cup of tea." She took the proffered chair and drew up to the blazing fire. In a very few moments the servant returned, but not alone. He was accompanied by a young lady who had evidently met him on his way to his master's chamber, and on inquiring his errand had directed him to return with her.

"Ah, Mrs. Macgillivray, welcome; but you are not an unexpected visitor."

Hearing the soft voice the widow arose, and dropping a curtsey, she exclaimed: "Why, Miss Angelica, glad indeed am I tae see yer bonnie face, an' tae feel the warmth o' yer sunny smile. Ye look just like yer name, an' mair sae amaist, an' I in my dool need an angel's ministrations."

It was not necessary for the fair girl she addressed to ask the cause of her sorrow, for the melancholy story of Dawney's mischance had travelled rapidly, and had brought peculiar anguish to her own young heart. Instead of words, therefore, she simply, with tactful sympathy, put her arm round the elder woman, and gently led her from the circle of curious servants into her own chamber. Not more affectionately could a daughter have comforted a mother in distress than Angelica comforted the afflicted widow. She made her rest in the most luxurious chair, brought her refreshments, reminded her soothingly of God's promises, and assured her that the son of her love would not be without a friend and a benefactor in the Duke. "Nay," she continued, "even my brother, Powrie, though he is a bit wild, will I am sure exert himself on behalf of your boy, and I, for one, have never had a doubt of Dawney's innocence."

"Eh, that's gude in ye tae say sae," replied the widow with a tone of self-reproach in her voice, "and I his ain mither hae been sae crazy as tae suspect him o' wrang."

"Do not blame yourself, Mrs. Macgillivray. You

Digitized by Google

know it is human to err, and I might have misjudged him myself had I not seen him."

"Seen him! when, whaur?"

"Why, here at Eskburgh, on the night of the robbery."

"But, how cam' ye to ken that the laddie was in these parts when yon thief hastit awa' wi' ither folk's gear?"

The question was right to the point and called for as direct an answer. Angelica stammered and blushed a bit, but seeing no way of escape replied:

"Mrs. Macgillivray, there are some subjects, particularly one, on which a young girl hesitates to talk with others, even with those of her own sex. You know yourself that I have been acquainted with your son ever since my brother and myself, then little more than children, on the death of our surviving parent, were taken by the Duke under his paternal care. He brought us here that he might foster us and guide our education. His wife was dead, and Kenneth, his only son and heir, had just entered Oxford and the good man was lonely. Among the few who enjoyed the freedom of the estate was Dawney. Being nearly the same age as Powrie, and only two or three years older than myself, we grew up together as playmates and friends. We all roved the banks of the Esk together. We often rolled down the brae-side in frolicksome fellowship, and shared with each other the sports and gruesome joys of Hallowe'en.

"Dawney was always kind to me. He made himself my guardian. He climbed the highest trees to gather fruit for me, he fought any laddie he thought was teasing me, and once when I slipped into the river he tumbled in after me, though the water was not deep enough to drown us, and Dawney, brave lad, could not swim a stroke. While school duties separated us somewhat, still our intercourse became only more precarious and did not cease. Whenever Dawney took a 'dux' medal in his studies he surely came to tell me of his luck, and when he was discouraged and things went wrong with him he would seek me out. Thus a certain intimacy grew be-

Digitized by Google

tween us, and I loved not my brother more than I loved Dawney.

"It was just about a year ago, one day in the gloaming, not far from the park entrance, he met me, and he was full of bitterness and wrath—excuse me for saying it, Mrs. Macgillivray—against his own father, whom he accused of dooming him to a life of drudgery and obscurity by his wasteful and degrading habits, and in his wild indignation he lifted up his hand and swore, so help him God, that he would never himself touch either pipe or bottle.

"I tried to soothe and encourage him, and talked to him about what might be accomplished by a man of capacity and energy though his start in life had not been fair. 'True,' he answered, 'true, if he has only something to strive for, something to hope for, but I have nothing.' And when I reproved him gently for his despondent mood, he turned, and looking me full in the face, exclaimed: 'Why, the only hope I ever cherished, and the only prize I care to win, are quite beyond me; so far that I dare not speak of them, lest I should be ridiculed and possibly become the laughing stock of the town.'

"His manner was excited, and, perhaps I went too far, but in the freedom of our long acquaintance I tried to rally him, and asked him plainly what was this lofty ambition, what this crown, that he esteemed so rich and precious that only madness could dream of its possession. Judge of my blank amazement when he replied with painful solemnity: 'Yourself!'"

"Yoursel', young leddy," ejaculated the astounded Mrs. Macgillivray.

"Myself," placidly echoed Angelica Rowallan.

"Why, the lad hae gane clean daft, the likes o' him to daur lift his e'en to the likes o' you," was the further comment of the widow.

"Do not speak in that way, mother of Dawney," continued the girl. "The honest love of a manly heart is not to be despised by woman, however illustrious her

Digitized by Google

rank and however obscure the position of her lover. It is an honourable and a sacred thing, and when it is laid at her feet she may put it from her if she please, but not with contempt and scorn. Proudly to disdain the humblest love, and to speak of it in mocking terms, is at once to become unworthy of a passion which God has exalted to be the truest and fairest expression of what is grandest in Himself.

"I did not say all this to Dawney, or anything like this. I told him only that perhaps he did not quite know his own mind, and that I was not certain I knew mine; and that he must not press me as I would not commit myself to any man without consulting my guardian, who was first of all entitled to my confidence and service."

"Weel, an' what did he say then, an' did the glamour flee awa' an' the akwart chap confess himsel' a gowk?" inquired the unpacified Sibilla Macgillivray.

"Why, no, why should he? But what he said it would not be gracious in me to repeat. Rest assured, however, he uttered no word that could bring a blush to my cheek or to his own. Since then, however, I have avoided meeting him, as I hesitated even to seem to encourage hopes that might never be realized; and moreover the Duke has been far too feeble for me to tell him what had taken place.

"Thus things have drifted along, only Dawney has not been fully reconciled to the plan, and though he has refrained from intruding, he has not abstained from haunting the premises, and more than once through my window I have seen him late at night standing statue-like gazing up at my chamber."

"Alake! the puir coof, wha would hae thoucht that Dawney wad hae acted maist like a fool? In his ain opinion he is nae sheep-shank. Waesucks! that I sud hae sic a bairn!" was the unsympathetic comment of Mrs. Macgillivray.

"You must not be too hard on him. Would you have him other than a man? Do they not all in some such

Digitized by Google

ways, perhaps foolish to us, seek to express their devotion? We wiser women must take them as God made them, and not be over-critical. Probably most of us soon eliminate the sentimental from their nature and make them practical enough, and possibly too practical for our own good. Was there not a time when your own lamented Brodie, the late deacon, hung upon your shadow, followed you, and sung sweet love ditties in the gloaming?"

Yes, indeed, there had been such a time. Through the mist of tears fast gathering in her eyes the widow saw that distant past, when Brodie was young and strong, and when he sat with her by the ingle neuk and whispered the old, old story in her ear, or kept tryst with her by the yette leading to the fields and sang:

"To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish:
Though despair had wrung its core
That would heal its anguish."

But that was before the drink came in, and the nights spent in coarse jesting, buffoonery, smoke and wassail had deadened the finer feelings of the soul and had converted the lover into a sot. Now it seemed so far away, that time of romance, of soft glances, deep sighs and whispered promises, so far, far away, that it was scarce possible to think that it had ever been, or that it would revive in other lives as the world grew old.

Mrs. Macgillivray said not a word, but memory was busy, and wet cheeks were more eloquent than speech.

Angelica continued: "We must make allowances for Dawney. We may pity his infatuation; I certainly do; but we must not forget that, without intending it, he has been following in the footsteps of the noblest lovers ever since one human heart craved affection from another. And, let me tell you, had it not been for his blind passion the evidence of his innocence might not be as clear as it is, for on the night of the robbery, at about eleven o'clock he stood opposite my window. There had oc-

Digitized by Google

curred a pause in the tempest, and I went to secure the casement, when the light which I held in my hand revealed him, indistinctly it is true, standing yonder near the tree. He noticed me, and gallantly waved his hand. Whether he left the park immediately or not I have no means of ascertaining, but had he sat out at once he could not have reached the house of Sir Murchison Carfrae in time to have committed the robbery, which must have been completed before one o'clock in the morning."

"An'," exclaimed the widow, "ye are wulling tae tak' yer aith tae this afore the bailies, the High Court o' Justiciary an' the Lord Advocate?"

"Truly, but before I do so I must tell everything to the Duke. There must be no concealment. I need advice. How could I appear in the presence of these learned lawyers of my own accord, and relate to them the story of Dawney's love? While there is nothing to be ashamed of in what has transpired between us, still you can understand the constraint and embarrassment I would feel were I to undertake the recital."

"Aye, my young leddy," responded the widow, "ye canna help but be laithfu', an' ye maun be careful. But the Duke I'm thinkin' is proud an' may be angry when he hears a' aboot Dawney, an' ye may no be able to pacify him. May be, gif I micht be bauld eneuch tae gang wi' ye tae his Grace, it micht save ye some tears."

"Thanks, Mrs. Macgillivray, for your thoughtfulness, but notwithstanding the high esteem in which the Duke holds you, I am certain it will be better for me to go to him alone, as a child to a parent, taking no one with me, as though a mediator were necessary to interpose between his love and my fault, if fault I have committed."

"Weel, I'm no wishin' tae intrude, an' aiblins I'm no worthy tae crack wi' gran' folks e'en though I sorrow mair than a' the ithers."

"You must not speak in such a way as this, mother. This is no question of worthiness, but of common sense. You know as well as I do that in this house when trouble comes there is no respect of persons. But the Duke is

Digitized by Google

sensitive and in matters concerning his household must be approached with circumspection. He will listen to me, and though at the first he may be hasty in his speech, he will ultimately do what is best for us all. Whatever comes of it, I must see him by myself alone. It may not be prudent to disturb him to-day, and I must watch for the most favourable opportunity. Trust me. I am as anxious as you are for a speedy termination to our solicitude. But you must confide in me. Believe me, I will do my best. In the meanwhile return to your home, and take counsel as you have always done of God. Also, put this small sum of money in your pocket—you can repay it by and by."

"O haith! leeze-me leddy, an' ye're a wunder! As ye say, I'll gang awa' frae here an' leave ye tae yer wark. I ken ye wull be feal an' see his Grace as soon as possible. But wull ye no say tae him frae me that I'm gettin' auld an' always hae been eerie, an' that when the dark shadow fell across my bed the ither nicht I suspected that it was Clootie himsel'. Tell him," and Mrs. Macgillivray here arose and began her preparations to depart, "I'm no sae sure about the deil as I was, for when I cam' tae think aboot it a' the shadow was no unlike a braw lad I ken, a lad I would be laith sud suffer skaith through me."

"But mother Macgillivray, who do you think it was?"

"I daurna say, my leddy-bairn, I daurna say. But tell his grace, whaever the shameless wastrel was he made me tak' an aith no tae betray him, an' that I canna stain my soul wi' perjury. Ye may also say that when Dawney scuffled wi' him he drapped a jewelled whittle sic as hieland folk wear in their tartan hose. I brought it wi' me. Here it is. Show it tae the Duke."

By this time the widow had completed her arrangements to leave the palace, and she handed the skean-dhu to Angelica, carefully watching and scrutinizing the countenance of the young woman as she received it from her. To Angelica the knife recalled no associations, and only meant a possible clew to the discovery of the guilty

Digitized by Google

party. If Mrs. Macgillivray had expected some start of recognition, some expression of confusion, and the involuntary betrayal of a name by which her own impressions would have been strengthened, she was completely disappointed. Nothing of the kind occurred. Angelica's composure was perfect. She glanced curiously on the tiny weapon, and in unruffled tones said:

"I will show it to the Duke, and repeat in every particular what you have told me." Then with the utmost tenderness she inspected the poor wraps of the troubled widow, brought a warmer outer garment to throw about her shoulders, kissed her affectionately, and accompanied her to the park gates, all along the road comforting, as only one woman can another, the aged mother to whom a son in prison was a more unspeakable calamity than a son entombed. Mourning more heavily for Dawney than Rachael of old did for her children, having, as she felt, more reason, for the children of Rachael merely "were not," while her winsome boy had perhaps better never have been, sorrowing Sibilla took her lonely way back to Edinburgh, back to her solitary dwelling, and back to the altar of the God of prayer, who is ever mindful of His promises, though often the suppliant only knows of their fulfillment when the immortal spirit has passed through life's anguish and has entered into the celestial and everlasting rest beyond.

Digitized by Google

III

A FAMILY HISTORY AND THE FLIGHT OF THE INNOCENT

ANGELICA was a maiden to be loved. She was not queenly, and no one would have chosen her as a type of imperial dignity, but there was a charm and a grace about her which made people think of her as a fairy princess who had been taken from an enchanted castle and made over into a Calvinistic saint. Her complexion was not Scottish, but was dark, though clear, and suggested southern skies. Her hair was black enough and sufficiently abundant to have crowned the brow of an Italian Madonna. Her eyes were large and lustrous, and shone with a softness which outrivalled the subdued radiance of the stars; twin stars they were, but instead of gleaming in the night, the night gleamed luminous in them. There was no haughtiness in her bearing, nothing garish in her dress, nor anything loud or self-assertive in her speech.

She was a model of self-reserve, and of well-bred manners, and yet she was not cold and distant. Her smile was not withheld from those about her, and she rarely failed to have a cheery word for those who greeted her, or a genial and pleasant salutation for every kind of folk. Vigorous in mind, swift in her intuitions, clear in her judgments, and remarkably endowed with a sensitive, religious and poetic nature, she rendered herself helpful to multitudes of humble people by counselling them in their perplexities and consoling them in their bereavements.

The roughest men employed in the industries of the town reverenced her; and when her girlish form appeared on the streets they uncovered and were silent, for

Digitized by Google

they knew she was bent on some errand of mercy. The gutter-soiled children ran after her and clutched at her gown, the women almost worshipped her, and all of them called her the angel.

Her brother, Powrie, was in no sense her masculine counterpart. In complexion and hair they resembled each other, but there the likeness ceased. His eyes differed from hers in that they were restless and searching. He was tall, lithe, sinewy, bold, dashing and easy in his bearing. His habits were none of the best and religion had no attraction for him. At the university he had captured the foremost prizes with remarkable facility, and was capable of sustained mental effort along various lines.

He was specially fascinated by medicine, and had already achieved some distinction for so young a man, particularly in chemistry. He was the chief oracle of his classes, and was generally admired by fellow students for his brilliancy. But there were singularities in his conduct which betokened a wayward nature. For days at a time he would abandon his books and his associates, and wander none of his intimate friends knew whither; or he would suddenly become taciturn and answer courteous inquiries abruptly and almost rudely; or, having admission to the most exclusive society in the Scottish capital, he would surrender himself to its charms, visiting from one great house to the other, delighting the ladies with the easy elegance of his manners and the charm of his polished conversation, or mingling with the more frivolous and dissipated set, would excel them all in hilarity and in the recklessness of his gambling ventures.

He was a living paradox and contradiction, having in himself the possibilities of greatness or meanness, of the largest and noblest manhood, or of the narrowest and vilest. A misstep, a serious mischance, and he might headlong rush to ruin and blight the better elements of his nature. His peril was not altogether unseen by some of those who were closely related to him, and

Digitized by Google

they had not failed when opportunity favoured to express their solicitude regarding his future. He rarely answered them seriously, occasionally smiled at their fears, or, if in ugly temper, snarled his resentment through his teeth.

Powrie was not unfrequently called the Master of Rowallan. Why he was thus distinguished no one exactly knew, for it was certain he owned no property either at Rowallan or elsewhere. His father had borne the title before him and he was proud of it, even though the estate in which it originated had long ago passed from the possession of his family, having been squandered in Jacobite conspiracies or in riotous excesses. The elder Rowallan was a man of daring spirit. He and Angus, the present Duke of Kincardine, had been from boyhood devoted companions and comrades. They had studied together, they had travelled together, they had shared in many nocturnal revels and mad adventures, and they had perilled their lives side by side, first at Waterloo, and then with Marcos Bozzaris in 1823 against the Turk.

When his modest financial resources were swallowed up in the monetary convulsions of the times, Angus secured for him a lucrative position in Java. There he had lived since 1826; there he had aided the Dutch in their conflict for supremacy with the native prince, Mataram; there he had amassed considerable wealth, most of which he had frittered away in social extravagance; there he had married a distinguished beauty of Spanish birth; there his children had been born, and there he and his wife were finally gathered to their fathers.

During the prolonged period of his voluntary exile his intimacy with Duke Angus had continued unabated. They regularly corresponded, and his Grace even went so far as to visit him at his home in Batavia. It was there that the Scottish peer had agreed to become the guardian of Rowallan's children should he survive their parents. And faithfully had he redeemed his

Digitized by Google

pledge, for he had housed them under his own roof, had watched over them, and he it was who first had called the orphan lad, as he had formerly called his father, the Master of Rowallan.

Two days after her separation from Mrs. Macgillivray, Angelica closely veiled alighted from a hackney carriage at the gates of the Edinburgh prison. The order she presented gained for her immediate admission and a courteous reception. She was at once shown to Dawney's cell. When its heavy door grated and creaked as it opened, the captive looked up from the page of a book he was reading, and was surprised to see the form of a woman. As she seemed purposely to conceal her face he was discreet enough not to speak. He merely rose. To his yet greater surprise his visitor whispered to the turnkey, and he touched his hat and withdrew, saying loud enough to be distinctly heard: "Remember, madam, your permit provides for only an interview of fifteen minutes."

Left thus to themselves, it scarcely needed the removal of the veil to satisfy Dawney that he was in the presence of the woman he loved. He was sensibly moved. He flushed crimson, and as Angelica approached with extended hand, he drew back, exclaiming: "Dinna touch me if you believe me guilty, and have only come to wound me with compassionate comments on my depravity."

"Hush, Dawney, and do not talk foolishly. I know you are innocent, and you know I know it, for did I not see you under my window yon fateful night? Will you not let me sit by your side a little while? Once you would have been glad to have me near you."

"And I am now. God aboon a' kens how glad I am tae see you an' tae hear frae your ain lips what I hae heard. It is muckle easier to bear my shame when ye speak that way, for it wad just hae killed me tae hae had ye say, 'Dawney, ye are a sorry loon an' a'—weel, the word sticks in my thrapple."

"There let it remain," responded Angelica, and as she

Digitized by Google

spoke she sat down beside Dawnéy on the rough bench, and gently took his hand in hers, "and never let it once be mentioned between us. I know that you are the victim of circumstances, and though I cannot penetrate the darkness and unravel the mystery, God can and will and must. I say *must*, for how can He expect to be adored as the Righteous One if He permit such outrages to pass unexplained and unavenged?"

Her passionate confidence in his integrity quite overcame the prisoner, and in the intoxication of his delight, before she realized what he was about, he had pressed her to his bosom and had imprinted a kiss on her brow.

"Dawney, dear, you must not do that. It is not right, and I never gave you permission," and Angelica with delicious gentleness disengaged herself from his arms. There was hardly any chiding in the tones of her voice, and one might have supposed from her manner that she was reluctant to pursue so drastic a course, and he thought he knew—oh, the presumption of lovers,—that he had not offended beyond forgiveness.

"Dawney, listen, you must not remain here. You must escape."

"Escape, why, I am awaiting trial, and have no intention of flittin' even if I could."

"But you must."

"Must?"

"Yes, I am sent here by the Duke to explain and arrange everything for your immediate flight."

"Hech!"

"True, it is strange, and I do not fully understand, but I have confidence in the wisdom of the Duke, and you must submit to his guidance."

"Is not that asking too much?"

"No; listen," and bending towards him, Angelica whispered the account of her interview with his mother, and repeated what his mother had said, particularly about the finding of the skean-dhu, and how it had been planned between them that the Duke must know all, as it was impossible for them to move without his assistance.

Digitized by Google

"Weel, what then?"

"I saw his Grace. I kept nothing back. All that Mrs. Macgillivray had told me of her oath I related. His Grace became excited; he asked many questions; he walked to and fro and muttered to himself, and kept examining the skean-dhu which I had handed to him when I began to speak. Of you he spoke with kindness, expressed his confidence in your innocence, and then added: 'My child, this business is too dark and deep for you to comprehend, and I myself am perplexed. What to do I know not.' He tenderly bade me to leave him alone for a while that he might compose his thoughts and perfect some plan of action. From that hour until this noon I had no opportunity of meeting or conferring with him. But I have learned of his untiring activity. He sent for Powrie, and the interview must have been stormy, for when my brother passed by my chamber door I saw upon his face that rebellious expression which so often has terrified me. The Duke, also, to the astonishment of his doctor, has in the meanwhile been to Edinburgh and has had a prolonged meeting with several gentlemen, among them, I believe, Sir Murchison Carfrae, and has even been closeted for an hour or more with his chief gillies, Eure Louther and Pinkie Cleuch."

"An' what is the outcome o' a' this talk and clatter? What may be my weird?"

"Well, Dawney, it is summed up in this. The Duke sent for me at twelve o'clock to-day, and he said that it looked, notwithstanding my testimony which lawyers regard as inconclusive, that if the case came to immediate trial, you could not be acquitted; that the best to be expected would be a verdict of 'not proven,' and that that would do you irreparable injury. In these circumstances, that time may be gained for fuller inquiry, and that you may be saved from a shameful sentence, it is proposed that you escape from the prison, and remain concealed until every preparation has been made for your triumphant vindication."

"And you, what do you think?"

Digitized by Google

"To be candid, Dawney, the plan is not altogether agreeable to me. It seems as though there were something wrong about it. And yet, the Duke is the soul of honour, and to doubt him would be to lose confidence in honour itself. I am compelled, therefore, by my reverence for him, in spite of my misgivings, to advise you to yield to his judgment."

"But, Miss Angelica, how on earth, even were I willing, am I tae get outside these walls, an' were I free, whaur could I go?"

"All that has been considered. If you consent, a man about your own size will be admitted here to-morrow afternoon. You will put on his overcoat, bonnet and plaid, and will walk down into the street. Around the corner from Waterloo Road a carriage will be in attendance, and you will enter. There you will meet a friend, and straightway you will be driven to Granton where the regular steamer for London awaits your arrival. On going aboard you will find a stateroom reserved for the Duke's gillie, Pinkie Cleuch, and without conversing unnecessarily with any one, you will take possession and make yourself as comfortable as possible until you arrive in the Thames."

"And then?"

Before an answer could be given the door was lazily swung open by the turnkey, and entering the cell, he announced the fifteen minutes more than exhausted. Angelica had risen from the wooden seat at the first sound of keys and bolts, and replacing her veil so that her face could not be seen, replied: "I am ready:" then glancing at her companion, she inquired: "And what message am I to return?"

"Say that the pleasure of the guidman is mine also. What he wull."

"So, then, I will report; farewell." Angelica extended her hand, which it is needless to record was warmly and significantly clasped, and with a motion to the turnkey she passed out into the cold corridors, and Dawney was once more left alone.

Digitized by Google

Ah, what a night he spent! He was alternately elated and depressed. All kinds of strange, contradictory thoughts went seething through his brain. To be free to breathe the free air of heaven, to drink in once more the perfume of the heather-impurpled hills, to move at will in glen and vale, to leap, to run, to shout or sing as inclination prompted, that was an ecstatic expectation; but,—and a cold shiver struck him as he contemplated the other side,—to be a fugitive from justice, hiding, fearing, disguising, despairing—that were intolerable.

He wavered, argued, disputed and wavered. To go was tacitly to avow his guilt; and yet to remain was simply to allow himself, though innocent, to be led as a sheep to the slaughter. Besides, what motive could a nobleman like the Duke of Kincardine have in misleading or deceiving a poor fellow like himself? He had always acted considerately towards him and his; and that he in a second should reverse his charater and adopt a line of conduct alien to his nature, was incredible.

Then there was Angelica! She certainly would not lend herself to any dubious scheme. He would not distrust. Love and confidence are inseparable. How could Dawney love Angelica and yet doubt her? He must either rely on her, or put her out of his life entirely; and consequently, like many another man, forgetting that the object of his passion was not infallible, he made up his mind to follow her counsel implicitly, even blindly, and to waver not a moment in his allegiance.

In confused and broken disputations with himself the hours of night moved wearily along, and morning found the prisoner feverish and impatient. He had frequently to pace his narrow quarters that composure might be restored. The conflict had more than once to be refought during the day; and it had just given place to apprehensions lest the entire scheme had miscarried when the bolt rang in its socket, and a tall man wrapped in a plaid and with a blue bonnet pulled over his brow was introduced by the turnkey.

"Here, Mr. Macgillivray, is a visitor to see you. If

Digitized by Google

you can understand his Gaelic it's more than I can. I've hardly been able to get a word out of him, the dour fellow. Maybe ye'll hae better luck. How he could get a pass frae the authorities I dinna comprehend. But that's nane o' my business. Get through quick, for I'm tae leave ye thegither for only ten minutes." Away went the turnkey, and creaking went the door as it closed on Dawney and his visitor. Promptly the man took off his plaid, bonnet, and overcoat and pushed them towards Dawney, and in so doing revealed his identity.

"What! an' is it you, Pinkie Cleuch?"

"Aye, mon, an' nane ither. Here, tak' the duds, an' dinna jauk."

"But," remonstrated Dawney, "do ye really ken what you are aboot, an' that your kindness may prove dearthfu' tae ye?"

"I ken weel eneuch. The Duke commaun's an' I obey. I'm no gash an' gleg, an' leave tae the chief the ordering, an' I gang whaur he tells me—tae prison gif he says sae, an' belyve tae the gallows gif he wulls," responded the stoical gillie.

"Still," urged Dawney, "do ye no ken that ye may be kept here some time?"

"An' what for no? Ane place is as guide eneuch as anither gif the chief is pleased. But haste. Put on the claes, an' when the mon comes for ye gang wi' him bravely, an' be pawky wi' him."

"But I can't speak Gaelic."

"What then? Yonner puir fule is no able tae understan' Gaelic or any ither heavenly tongue, an' blethers in naething but Southron."

By this time coat, plaid and bonnet had been appropriated and put on, and Pinkie had taken to himself a portion of Dawney's outer attire. The exchange had just been completed, and the men had barely changed places in the cell, when the door turned slowly on its hinges, and the voice of the custodian reminded them that the allotted ten minutes had expired. Dawney, as speaking for his substitute, answered: "Very weel, he's ready

Digitized by Google

to go;" and then with a parting nod to Pinkie, and trying as far as possible to imitate that worthy, he joined the turnkey on the threshold, and the pair traversed the stone pavements and steps, the visitor as uncommunicative and as irresponsive as when he entered. With a grunt of satisfaction at the departure of so uncivil a guest, his guide barred the portals of the jail behind him, and Dawney, once more at liberty, crossed the street to the foot of Carlton Hill, saw the carriage waiting, boldly entered it and found himself by the side of Angelica.

The driver had received his instructions, and without waiting gave the horses rein and whip, and they swiftly moved towards the neighbouring village of Granton. Dawney, all alone in the presence of his love, was in the seventh heaven of delight, and hardly knew whether he was in the body or out of the body. But the jolting of the vehicle soon made him realize that he was yet on earth, while Angelica, exercising the prerogative of her sex, very speedily dispelled his celestial illusions. She straightway informed him that this was not a pleasure drive, and that they were not on their way to Gretna Green, and that they had no time for soft speeches and sentimental dreams.

"We must be practical now," she continued, "and you must give heed to the Duke's instructions. He desires me to say that he has placed for your use one hundred pounds in the inside pocket of Pinkie's coat, which you have on, and that when you meet again he and yourself can arrange for the settlement of the debt. Also he wishes you to understand that he will look after your mother and sister, and assures you that he will not permit them to suffer. But he deems it best that you should avail yourself of this perplexing state in your affairs to emigrate, and to make for yourself a career in America where so many opportunities offer themselves to the diligent and persevering. We can communicate with you there, and when the fitting hour arrives, and the means are at hand to establish your innocence you can return with honour and safety to your native land."

Digitized by Google

The young man was somewhat staggered by this programme so calmly unfolded, and did not hesitate to remonstrate. But the bewitching influence of the woman at his side was more than he could resist, and she was not lacking in ability to enforce the Duke's counsels with reasons of her own, reasons which held out a hope that in the future, when existing difficulties had been removed she would requite his love. That hope was conclusive with Dawney, and he rushed headlong into avowals of devotion to her, and of his readiness to do whatever she might dictate.

His ardour, however, was suddenly quite cooled by the thought of his poor mother left alone and separated from without even a word of farewell, and his heart misgave him. Again he was irresolute, but his fair companion knew how to comfort him. She assured him, had it been possible without incurring the danger of rearrest, he would have been taken to say good-bye to Mrs. Macgillivray. The peril, however, was too great to be risked, and Angelica added, that she would be the bearer of his farewell messages, she would explain the necessity for his abrupt departure, and would in the future be a daughter to her and a sister to Zinnia.

"I have seen them both more than once," she said, "since your misfortune, and have in some degree prepared your mother for what is to come. This morning I told her that the trial might be delayed, as delayed it will be, and begged of her two or three of your books and a few articles of clothing for your immediate use, and there they are on the seat in front of you, done up with her own hands, and from the tears that fell on the bundle I am sure her blessing was not withheld."

Dawney himself wept and was silent. But a soft hand searched out, timidly and gently, for one hard and strong, and the two were joined together; and the touch was more efficacious than the language of argument and could not be resisted.

"See," she exclaimed, "we are almost there. The pier and the steamboat are already in sight, and Eure Louther

Digitized by Google

has orders to stop as soon as he reaches the sea wall. We are about to part. Before we do I want to commit this skean-dhu to your keeping. Just before leaving the palace this morning I saw it on the table in the Duke's library, and an unaccountable impulse constrained me to pick it up and bring it to you. It is the weapon discovered by Zinnia the day after the robbery. Why I should have been impelled to take it I know not. It may have been only a whim—it may be providence. But you are more vitally interested in it than anybody else, and I am persuaded that for the present you should keep it in your possession. I have folded it up in my handkerchief as the sheath has not been found, and I would not have it wound you by its sharp edges."

Dawney mechanically took the tiny weapon, and as he was about to speak the carriage came to a standstill. What he had thought to say was arrested by the voice of the gillie, and placing the knife in his pocket, he pulled Angelica passionately to his bosom and kissed her.

"Good-bye, dearest, good-bye. I trust you. I have asked for no promises. A man in my position is entitled to none. But, listen, I love you and only you, and I will love none other. If the hour shall ever come when you shall say to me, 'Dawney, it is impossible,' I shall still go on loving my love, and if we never meet again, remember that with my last breath I shall have to confess that I have loved you more than my God, and that Angelica—the angel of His presence—has been more to me than the Presence itself."

"Oh, Dawney, don't talk that way——" But he was out of the carriage with the little bundle in his hand, and turned only once to say "Farewell;" then, relapsing into his Scotch dialect, he uttered a few friendly words to Eure Louther, and hurried down the pier, passed the gangway, sought his cabin and shut himself in. The vessel, in a few minutes, began to move, and headed towards the sea. Dawney looked out of the porthole, but in the evening shadows could see nothing distinctly. Throwing off his outer garments, he recalled the parting gift he had re-

Digitized by Google

ceived from Angelica. He removed it from his coat, unwound the handkerchief from about it, and wrapped it up in something less delicate and precious. Having replaced the skean-dhu in his pocket, he took the little handkerchief and carefully folded it as though it had been the veritable Veronica, and secured it safely near his heart. No knight flaunting his lady's colours could ever had been more delighted than was this raw Scotch lad with his prize, and no saint could have felt more comforted in the presence of a sacred relic than did he in owning a trifle which his beloved had handled, and which by her dear touch had become forever sanctified to love.

Digitized by Google

IV

THE DELIGHTS AND THE DANGERS OF TIGER BAY

THREE days after her departure from Granton the easy-going steamer arrived in the Thames, and Dawney found himself in the great metropolis and in the unsavory neighbourhood of Limehouse-hole. He wandered aimlessly along until he saw the sign of the Gunboat Tavern. The hostelry was not inviting, but he entered, notwithstanding, and obtained some refreshments of dubious quality, and intrusted his meagre luggage to the care of the landlord.

Evening was growing into night, and Dawney decided on a leisurely stroll that he might witness some of the famous sights of London. He had no idea of the locality he was about to traverse, and it had never entered into his head to discriminate between respectable districts and those given over to vice and crime. Consequently, he was much surprised at the monotony and uniformity of the tawdry splendour and undisguised viciousness that confronted him on every side. Along the waterway near Wapping Old Stairs, through the narrow thoroughfare named Ratcliff-highway, and in and about the hideous network and tortuous maze of courts and alleys which made up the horrible headquarters of infamy, known as Tiger Bay, he met only half-inebriated seamen, and swarms of Lascars and Malays on their way to their mad opium orgies, and frightful petticoated creatures, decorated with bangles, bracelets and necklaces, following on hungry for their prey.

The youth looked into the public houses, the concert halls, the dancing and singing resorts, all gay and sparkling with gas lighting up glistening chandelier-drops, and heard the twanging of rickety harps, the scraping of

Digitized by Google

wheezy fiddles, and the strumming of tuneless, tremulous pianos, but he abstained from participating in the coarse revels which were exciting to a delirium of animal passion multitudes of reckless men and unfortunate women. He nodded a grave, kindly nod to every fellow who nodded to him, and even acknowledged the salutation of a Jew, whose face and head were overwhelmed with tangled heaps of luxuriant hair, and who stood at the door of a second-hand cheap clothing shop.

"Vat are you up to, you young villains, in this part of Lunnon towns?" There was a commingling of rough kindness and suppressed wrath in the Jew's voice, and the Scotch youth hardly knew how to take him. He replied, however, that he had come to the metropolis in search of his fortune.

"And," sarcastically rejoined the Hebrew, "you have commenced to look for it in Tigers Bay, vere the ships go down in the night, and vere every wreck is plundered. Vat you expects to find there or anyvere roundabout Vapping? Are there gold and jewels in the Gunboat Tavern at Limehouse, or in the Prussian Flags public house in Ship-alley? Vell, if there are, bring thems to me, and I vill go to our bessed Queens an' vill ask her to makes you a peer of the realm." He was seemingly amused by his own droll conceit, and his chuckle had in it the suspicion of a laugh. "No, no," he continued, "there ish no fortunes to be made anyvere near Ratcliff-highway. They must be sought in the city or in the colonies. And," he added, fixing his large searching eyes on Dawney, "vy don't you emigrate?"

The question asked so plumply and so directly, falling in with the wishes of Angelica, quite startled Dawney. Recovering himself he answered that he had thought of it, but had not yet been able to make up his mind. To which the Jew responded:

"You should do so at vonce. I can sells you an emigrant ticket at a bargains. There vas a man who bought one and vas to sails to-morrow for Australia, vere the gold nuggets lie loose on the roads; but he must first of

Digitized by Google

all visit Tigers Bay and he vas robbed. Having no cash and being sicks he asked me to have pitys on him and buy his ticket from him so that he could go back home and rest. Out of compassions I lets him have the tin, and I have the ticket in mine shops and can sell it dirt sheap, and must, for the ship sails early to-morrow."

"But, Moses, I don't care about Australia, and I don't want to leave London so soon. I am obliged to you, and trust you may find a customer. If you do not, why not go yourself, especially if gold is so abundant?"

"So I should, so I should, but I'm a Jews. How could a poor Jews hope to succeed vere the strong races are masters? Our despised people must picks up a sheap living in the great centres of civilization, and keep starvations from the door by trafficking in the leavings and the cast-off luxuries of the Saxon. Vere I'sh not a Hebrew, I'sh vould go to Australia and fill a ships vith gold, and ven I'sh comes back I'sh vould buy the Holy Lands or opens von bank in the city."

Dawney was not sure whether the Jew was in earnest or was only mocking him, but he was conscious of a growing repugnance. He did not like his appearance and his manners he liked less than his person. It was difficult for him to make out whether the dealer in second-hand clothing was old or young. He might be either. His face was so densely covered with hair, and his garments were so greasy, slovenly, patched and variegated, as though he only permitted himself to wear the unsalable remnants of his soiled and seamy stock in trade, that his age was effectually concealed from the curious. He might have been only thirty, and again he might have been upwards of fifty. But probably he was not quite forty, and was one who had been prematurely forced by harsh conditions into a maturity which in its cunning, obsequiousness and mendaciousness could hardly be paralleled.

Dawney was so unfavourably impressed by the man that he was anxious to escape from his presence, but as he moved away the Jew continued to expatiate on the

Digitized by Google

golden opportunity that had come to the youth, vowing by every conceivable holy thing that he would never have such a chance again, and more than intimating that only contumacious idiocy or stubbornness stood between him and countless millions. It was not easy to combat his expostulations, and at the last the Scotch youth had literally to run that he might free himself from the vigorous remonstrances and importunities fast growing into savage objurgations.

Dawney sought again the immediate neighbourhood of Limehouse, but as he was approaching his tavern he was attracted by a crowd of three or four hundred people leaving a little, stuffy, penny theatre, and he drifted on with them in the direction of Tiger Bay. The crowd fascinated him; he was amused at their comments on the play; he was diverted by the mutual chaffing; and he was even interested, though sadly, by the coarse, vulgar talk he heard, and by the repeated drinking and occasional fighting he witnessed. Quite a number, who had made up the procession when it started, fell out of the ranks and were left behind in public houses, or wandered off down dingy alleys and dirty lanes to squalid, rickety tenements where they made their miserable homes.

The company that kept on, though constantly diminishing, was considerable, and grew more boisterous and hilarious as it proceeded. The women in particular became freer in their manners, and louder in their speech, and were disposed to brawl among themselves. Just as the noisy crowd was surging past "Jack's Delight," a shady resort, where many a sailor lad had been drugged and robbed, a wretched creature arrayed in a draggle-tail gown, smeared and smudged with the stains of dissipation, emerged from the tap-room and confronted the merrymakers. She was not drunk, but the craving in her for strong drink was at its height, and she clamoured:

"Gin, ladies and gentlemen, give me gin," and then more pleadingly, "for the love of heaven, ladies and gentlemen, give me a few pennies for gin."

"Get out of our way, Jane Booser, get out of our

Digitized by Google

way," replied a flabby, slouchy, ramshackling figure of a man, with big, sprawling hands and the merest suggestion of a head, "you oughtenter drink no more gin tonight, for if ye do ye'll be in Bridewell again, an' ye know ef ye keep on going there as ye 'ave done ye'll wear out your welcome. 'Ow often, Jane, 'ave ye been taken up for bein' drunk and disorderly?"

"None of your business," retorted the woman. "If rogues had their due you'd be there for good and all, duffer, welsher, crimp and fence that you are."

"Stop yer foul mouth, ye mopsy trull and drab, or I'll smash yer face in."

"Here, here, now," Dawney ventured to interpose, drawing attention to himself in the crowd that had paused to enjoy the altercation—"don't hurt the woman, and don't call her names." No sooner had he spoken than Jane Booser laid hold of his arm, and seeing compassion in his face, ignored contemptuously her assailant, and entreated with pathetic insistency: "Gin, kind sir, give me a sixpence for gin, only a sixpence."

A sailor-boy who had made himself particularly offensive, playing mad pranks on unsuspecting people and replying to their threats with coarse obscenity, and who, child though he was, had been drinking, now began to burlesque her manner, and with hand outstretched, repeated her appeal: "Money for gin, fine ladies and gentlemen, a few pennies for gin."

The loiterers laughed at his imitation, and encouraged by their approval, he tried to thrust Jane roughly from the pavement. Furious with anger, the abused woman turned upon him and sought to lay hold on him, but he was too quick for her. He easily jumped beyond her reach, while she in clutching for him lost her balance and fell with a groan on the hard roadway. The lad, however, escaping from her wrath, was greeted with a sound cuff on his ear which sent him sprawling beside his unfortunate victim. And Dawney, who had chastised him so promptly, cried out: "Get away from here, wi' yer smoutie gab or I'll mak' yer hunkers an' hurdies tae

Digitized by Google

ache." In his excitement he seemed able to do more complete justice to the occasion in the Scottish tongue, and so kept on heaping up expletives and threats in words which no one in the company understood. The disintegrating crowd was brought suddenly to a standstill by the commotion, particularly by the yells of the boy, the execrations of the forlorn woman, and the unintelligible sputtering and jargon of the chivalrous Scotchman.

A big, beefy hand was laid heavily on Dawney's shoulder, and a husky, foggy, muffled voice took him to task for the slap he had given the mischievous youth. "Why," it reproachfully inquired, "did ye go for to strike the precious kid? Don't ye know 'e's a horphan? Ain't a horphan got 'is rights? Oughtenter 'e ter play and be 'appy?"

"Play? Yes, but there was nocht o' harmless daffin' an' rantin' in the young loon's mak' game o' the puir duddie creetur."

These unfamiliar words,—and Dawney in his excitement spoke more rapidly and vehemently than he was wont—served only the more to rouse the ire of the damp and mouldy voice, and to produce the impression that the air was being filled with a choice selection of piratical oaths uttered in an unknown tongue..

"What pigeon lingo is this ye're pattering? Can't ye speak Hinglish like a gent? Don't ye know I've a mind to douse yer glim for ye before ye vamoose?" And the other monstrous hand was raised threateningly, as though to carry into immediate execution the amiable intention. Dawney drew back, lifted his arm by way of defence, and with a dangerous look in his eyes, muttered thickly: "Have a care, man, have a care!"

The crowd was delighted with these signs of a possible rough-and-tumble fight, and with the instinct of the skulking, lazy English rough, who is always ready to help when any smashing is to be done, called out: "A ring, a ring," while several representatives of London blackguardism offered themselves as referees, seconds and

Digitized by Google

bottle-holders. Nothing short of a brutal pugilistic encounter would now satisfy the night-prowlers. They pressed closer together, and, with much noise, tried to form a circle round the two men, and officiously offered advice as to the best method of procedure. But Dawney disengaging his shoulder from the weight that rested on it, answered: "I have no quarrel with any of you, and I am not going to fight. Let me pass and go on my way quietly now, or I will call the police. That is English. Do ye understand that?"

"Hinglish, yes," replied the individual with the ample fists and meagre head, who had at the first railed against Jane Booser. "Ye can spake the tongue purty well; but Hinglishmen fight fust and call the perlice arter." And without further warning the owner of the hoarse and smothered voice dealt Dawney a tremendous slap on the face with the open palm of his huge hand, while the crowd broke forth into wild shouts of approval, mingled with jeers for the Scot and friendly tips to the aggressor, urging him to "pitch in," "do him up," and smash him generally. Dawney reeled from the force of the blow, and blood oozing through the broken skin gave evidence of its cruelty. He did not strike back, however; he stood irresolute, dazed. His fingers began to clutch nervously, and he again uttered the ominous warning: "Have a care, man, have a care!"

"Care for yerself, blast ye," retorted the voice, while its possessor brought his lumbering, incoherent body into a suitable pose for boxing, and then sent his right arm swinging in the direction of Dawney's face. Dawney skillfully broke the force of the savage blow, and stepped a pace or two backwards. The mob yelled at him: "sneak," "coward," "shame," and his opponent followed him up, trying to land telling and crushing raps and whacks. Dawney recoiled from him, and strove to defend himself as best he could, repeating: "Have a care, have a care, man!" Others felt called on to join in the fray against him, and thumps and kicks were freely administered. He was driven, prodded, buffeted, bela-

Digitized by Google

boured, mauled and battered, brazen women as well as flashy men sharing in the barbarous pastime. At last he made a stand. His Scotch blood was on fire. He hardly knew what he did. But he struck back, and maddened by the inequality of the struggle he drew the skean-dhu from his pocket, and flashing it in the eyes of his foes, he shouted: "Have a care, I tell ye, have a care and make way there!"

Some of his assailants, afraid of cold steel, fell back, but the sailor lad, who had dogged in and out among the rabble seeking to trip up the man who had chastised him, now attempted to seize the uplifted arm from behind. Dawney could not see who it was, neither could he venture to parley. He did not look, he did not even hesitate, but as soon as he felt the grip upon his arm he retaliated with a backward slash, which grievously gashed the boy's shoulder. Down tumbled the youth carrying the tiny weapon with him, and there he lay bleeding and swooning.

The excited throngs now thundered for the police, and accused each other of cowardice in not laying hold of the murderer. But the murderer, conscious of his friendless position, kept waving his bloody hand, while neither he nor those about him knew that it had lost the instrument of death, and threateningly exclaimed: "Have a care, have a care, have a care!" Then he dashed through the terrified circle of spectators, and plunged into the labyrinth of narrow streets, whose darkness and angular ways promised to conceal him.

Onward Dawney ran, through lanes, alleys, and courts, passing pot-houses and gin-palaces, the dens of desperate men and the lairs of despairing women. His flight was stimulated for a time by the sound of pursuing feet, and was quickened by the cheery words of tattered rogues, who taking him to be one of their own order fleeing from justice, did what they could to further his escape. Whither he went, along what dangerous passages he travelled, by what deadly rookeries, haunted by memories

Digitized by Google

of dastardly crimes, he passed, he never halted to ascertain and never knew.

In and out, in and out, through seemingly endless mazes of brick and mortar, he ran panting, horror-stricken, and wondering how the race would end, never for a moment realizing that he was penetrating a region, where if he had ventured to explore at his leisure, he would have probably fallen a victim to the footpad or the ruffianly garroter. Still he pushed rapidly ahead, and though at last he felt sure that he had distanced his pursuers, he did not relax his pace, but forged forward as by the force of the momentum which started him on his swift retreat. He was thus rushing furiously along, when the street made a sharp turn into a broader and better-lighted thoroughfare, and before the fugitive could stop himself, the headway he was under carried him into the arms of the Hebrew from whom he had separated only an hour earlier. Unhesitatingly the Jew drew him into his shop, the shutters of which were up for the night, and where only a couple of gas-jets flared, and having speedily secured the door, he fixed his gaze on the almost breathless Dawney and began to interrogate him.

"Vat ish de matter, you young villains? Vy you runs avay like mad? 'Av yous been thievings or killings? By holy Moses you've bloods on your face and hands. Vat hav yous done? I'sh dis de vay you seeks your fortune?"

Dawney was not so far overcome by his misadventures and by their possible fatal catastrophe as to betray himself. Though it cost an effort he regained comparative composure, and evinced the self-mastery for which his countrymen are famous.

"Oh," he replied, "only a little tussle, nothing worth speaking about. A drop or two of whiskey, a spat or two in a howff about a limmer, and then a barley-bree uproar and a friendly fight."

"Vat ish dis you says about barleys-brees and limmers? I'se no understand vat you means. But tells me vy yous runs so hard an' vy yous could not stop

Digitized by Google

yourself ven I'se keeps you from breakin' your vorthless necks?"

"Well, Moses!"

"But mys name's not Moses. I'm Ichabod."

"Well, Ichabod, I was just in a hurry to see you. I was so anxious I raced all the way."

"Me?" ejaculated the incredulous Hebrew.

"Yes, you; let me tell you the truth." Alas, alas, poor Dawney; what would Angelica think? And so soon! "You see what you told me about Australia has laid hold of my fancy, and I begin to feel that I would like to handle some of the nuggets which are going to waste in the fields. Then I remembered you said you had a ticket which you'd sell cheap, and as I was afraid you might sell it to some one else I just set off with a rush. If you yet have it, how much do you want for it?"

The Jew did not believe him. He knew there was a lie somewhere. He perceived that for some reason the young man was in haste to depart from the country. But for what reason? That it was connected with his swollen face and battered appearance he made no doubt. What crime could he have committed? Would he better inquire? Were he too inquisitive and scrupulous might he not lose a favourable opportunity of turning an honest penny? As the Jew revolved these queries in his mind, Dawney began to mistrust him in turn. What if he were to get the money for the ticket, and before the ship sailed discover what had happened, might he not hand the purchaser over to the officers of the law and gain a substantial sum in blood money for his perfidy? Yes: nothing easier. Each man, being suspicious of his fellow, fenced about, and tried as far as possible to deceive and circumvent the other. At last Ichabod came directly to the point:

"Several shentlemen hash tried to buys the ticket, an' hash bargained for it, an' one shtands ready to takes it. But 'ash it ish so good a thing I 'ash made up my minds not to sell it, but go to Australia myself." This was said softly, seriously, and with a sort of purring per-

Digitized by Google

suasiveness in the voice, as though to remove every conceivable doubt of the speaker's sincerity. Dawney was certainly taken aback by the avowal, and in his inexperience knew not now to proceed. Some reply, however, had to be made, and he blurted out:

"But you informed me earlier in the night that as you are a Jew you would not undertake so prolonged a voyage."

"Yes, my sons, but since then I 'ash looked into de Bibles and reads there that the riches of the Gentiles are to be de Jew's, an' I tinks I will go for mys share."

An awkward pause ensued, and the two men sat looking at each other. Dawney was worried. He had every reason to be disturbed; for while he could not bring himself to believe that the blow inflicted by so small a weapon as the one he had used would terminate fatally, still there was a possibility. Then he had lawlessly put in jeopardy the life of a fellow-being, and that fellow-being a mere slip of a youth. Therefore, looked at in any light, his conduct was gravely reprehensible. Although his position was so serious, however, he could not for a moment brook the thought that he, a Scotchman, contrary to all the traditions of his race, should be outwitted by a Jew. Never had such a thing been heard of, and for him to furnish an exception to the rule would be almost as inexcusable as dirking an assailant in a street brawl. After the silence had continued for a few seconds Dawney came to a decision, and indeed the necessity for immediate action was imperative. He rose and moved towards the door, saying: "I will be wishing you good-night, or rather good-morning, Mr. Ichabod, for it must be near on to one o'clock, and will just wait for the next ship, and then I shall be able to arrange more to my liking."

But his departure in this fashion was not what Ichabod desired. It would be letting one whom he regarded as a gudgeon slip through his net, and he was not given to such stupidity. "Nows, nows, vat yous go avays so fast for?" he asked, and placing his bulky form directly be-

Digitized by Google

tween Dawney and the door, he continued in coaxing and conciliatory tones: "You knows, my childs, I'sh feels kindly to you. Ven yous first comes here I'sh says 'dat ams a lovely youths, an' I'sh vish I'sh could makes him riche.' I'sh thens offered yous de ticket to Australia. I'sh vas foolish to do soes, but ven Ichabod offers he nevers goes back on hish vord. I'sh villings to shtay at homes and gives yous de great shance. It ish a loss to me; but, thens, I'sh 'av promised, and musht keeps my vord, and I'sh veels to yous, my sons, like a fader."

As the Jew spoke his face became hideously affectionate in its expression, and his eyes summoned to his aid the tenderness of cunning tears. It did not need the acumen of a Scotchman, however, to comprehend the situation, and Dawney, for all of his blunders, was as clear-sighted as most of his countrymen. He took his bearings in a flash, and knew exactly the course to be pursued. There immediately followed a most strenuous and edifying encounter between the Scot and the Jew.

The Scot was unwilling to hold the Jew to his promise, as he had a right to change his mind, but the Jew, with the usual disinterestedness of his race, insisted on being generous. The Scot demurred that the sacrifice of the Jew's Australian expectations was more than should be made, but the Jew declared that he was ready to surrender even more, so strong was his attachment to the Scot. The Scot expressed his appreciation of this considerate regard, yet feared that the purchase of the ticket would be far beyond his means, but the Jew assured him that the passage money, including the outfit, was only a trifle, a matter of only one hundred pounds. The Scot replied that to millionaires, like the Jew, the sum was undoubtedly small, yet to him it was fabulous, but the Jew asserted that the ticket ought to command more and could not be disposed of for a penny less. Then the Scot regretted his inability to purchase at any such figure and prepared again to withdraw, but the Jew detained him, and swore that only his affection for him and his desire to promote his future welfare inclined him to abate

Digitized by Google

these terms. The Scot, however, declined to entertain the more moderate price fixed by the Jew.

The Jew hesitated to go any lower than ninety pounds, so the Scot in his turn had to be specific, and, to the consternation of the Jew, blandly offered for passage and emigrant's kit seventy pounds. The Jew protested that such a trade would beggar him, and would never have been proposed had not the Scot imagined that he was compelled to sell, but the Scot stood firm. The Jew grew desperate. The Scot slowly computed, the Jew excitedly argued. The Scot pretended that the time had finally arrived for him to leave, the Jew besought, entreated him to remain, and to be fair and just. The Scot, then, peremptorily announced his resolve not to go to Australia at all, and the Jew, for the good of the Scot, as he avowed, then held him to his pledge and said he would accept the seventy pounds. Thus the bargain was struck, the Scot congratulating himself that the Jew had not overreached him, and the Jew chuckling that he had juggled the Scot into paying more than the articles involved in the transaction had probably cost the prodigal profligate whom bankruptcy or something worse had overtaken in Tiger Bay; for, as it may well be believed, all that he had related of his personal kindness towards the unfortunate spendthrift was pure fiction.

The agreement provided that the Scot should pay down then and there twenty pounds, and on reaching the vessel and receiving his ticket and outfit should pay the rest; and that the Jew on his side should shelter and care for the Scot on his premises until the time of departure had arrived, should then take him in a four-wheeler to the Gunboat Tavern where he had left his personal effects, and should see him safely on board the emigrant ship. As neither party to the contract had any confidence in the other these conditions enabled them to safeguard their respective interests, and assured to them both the complete success of their mutual scheming. Fortunately nothing occurred to hinder the execution of their plans, and the faithful performance of their engage-

Digitized by Google

ments. Dawney, it is true, did not sleep very much, as the shop was stuffy and he mistrusted Ichabod, besides having troubles of his own which made him restless. Ichabod did not sleep at all, as he was bound to watch the human fly whom he imagined his astuteness had entangled in his web. The dawn grew into day at last, and at an early hour, after the traces of the night's vicissitudes had been removed, and the brief discussion of a frugal meal had been satisfactorily closed, the two men set out for the tavern and the docks.

The docks were reached after a slow and tedious drive, and none too soon, for the tide was nearly full, and the ship was almost ready to leave her berth.

Sails had been loosed and were hanging in negligent folds from the yards, and the decks were littered with ropes, with unclaimed emigrants' boxes, and belated articles of merchandise. There were friends bidding adieu to friends who were going far away from home and native land, husbands in search of wealth leaving their wives, and sons their mothers, nearly all trying to be brave and cheerful, yet all of them more or less depressed and solemn.

Tears, hand-shaking, embracing, and farewell messages were abundant, mingled with the orders of the mate and boatswain, the "aye, aye, sir," of the seamen, the creaking of the crane and the rattle of the capstan. Noises of all kinds, from the rumbling of carts on the shore to the trampling and shuffling of feet on the decks, from the shouting of the final instructions by owners to the whispering of sweet promises by lovers, interblended and ended in a confused and discordant chorus; while on every side rush, hurry, hustling and jostling prevailed, nearly every one apparently seeking for something that could not be found, or getting in the way of busy people hastening to do what had yet been left undone.

Through the tumult and the throngs Ichabod and his companion pressed their way. They ascended the gangplank, and crossed the deck to a hatch which led to the steerage. Down the companionway they went in silence,

Digitized by Google

and took possession of a vacant bunk. Having placed therein the straw mattress and the other effects of the emigrant, they sat down as best they could on the uncomfortable edge, and in the uncertain light of flickering lanterns suspended overhead, concluded what yet remained unfinished of their agreement.

Said Ichabod: "Here ish your tickets."

Said Dawney: "And here is your money."

The exchange being made, while the Jew was counting the bank-notes, the Scot carefully scrutinized the passage ticket. He looked it over carefully, and detecting what was to him a very serious flaw—he, lowering his voice, expressed to the Jew his disappointment: "Why it is made out in a name that is not mine. It is of no value to me."

"Not so fashts, my young friends. Vat ish a names to yous? Ish not von ash goot ash any others? Ven yous comes to Australia yous can goes back to vat you please."

It was useless to argue. Stentorian voices were commanding "visitors ashore," and the sound of the hawsers in the hawser holes, and the clatter of feet on the deck, were distinct intimations that the time for wrangling had gone. The situation could not be changed. Dawney must sail under an assumed name or not sail at all. Were he to leave the vessel, it would be impossible to recover his money from the Jew, and then, might it not be better for him to leave his identity behind? The embarrassment could not now be rectified, whatever view might be taken, and the only thing to be done was to make the best of the unpleasant predicament. Ichabod, indifferent as to what the young man thought, and happy in the consciousness that he had brought a difficult business affair to a successful termination, gathered his loose coat round him, and hastened to depart. He heaped his benedictions on the young man's head, recapitulated the advantages the youth had derived from his guileless unselfishness, and favoured him with various scraps of worldly wisdom in the form of stale maxims and antique

Digitized by Google

proverbs—and went clumsily and slouchingly on his way.

Dawney did not attempt to follow. There was no reason why there should be affectionate leave-taking of the Jew, and there was no one else on the dock or in the whole of London town who cared whether he lived or died. The sense of his loneliness and desolateness was acute, and the obscurity which reigned between decks was more congenial to him than the brightness of the outer world. He could not but reflect on his accumulated misfortunes.

Here he was an outcast from his native land, innocent of any crime, and yet branded as a liar and a thief. Here he was in his flight from undeserved imprisonment falling into the very iniquity of falsehood, which was so abhorrent to his nature, and though he had not stolen, here he was with blood upon his hands, and compelled by circumstances to bear the name of another. Was ever anybody's plight as deplorable, as dark, humiliating and shameful as his own? Could there be any conceivable extrication from the miserable muddle and tangle into which by no fault of his own he had been betrayed? On account of the lad he had inadvertently wounded, he dared not reveal his identity, and even hesitated to write home, were it possible now that the ship had entered the river to find the means of transmitting a letter to the shore. The thought of home quite unmanned him and his heart throbbed painfully. As he strove to restrain its beating his hand touched his most sacred treasure, and he drew from his bosom the handkerchief which had been given him. Heedless of prying eyes, and indifferent to the curiosity of his fellow-voyagers, he kissed it passionately over and over again, and pronounced, to him, the sweetest name on all the earth—"Angelica!"

"Mike," inquired an emigrant, who had just been roused by the movement of the vessel, "did ye hear that chap saying something about the angels?"

Digitized by Google

V

WHAT CAME OF DAWNEY'S TEMPESTUOUS VOYAGE

TOWARDS evening Dawney went on deck that he might obtain a glimpse of the land he was abandoning so reluctantly. The tug-boat was gone, and the *Jack Cade* had passed Sheerness and was off the Nore. A favourable wind was prevailing, and the yards were being braced sharp up as it was blowing two or three points abaft the beam. The vessel was carrying a good deal of canvas, and from the foremast to the mizzenmast the sails seemed to be rapfull. Sailors were busy sheeting home, or trimming, and those among them who were at the braces were rendering emphatic each pull by chorusing the cheerful proposal "to blow the man down." A considerable sea was running, and as the ship entered the English Channel and bore round the point at North Foreland her reception to the fuller embrace of old Neptune was uncompromisingly rough. Long before she approached the Foreland most of her passengers had gone below. The chill in the air and the searching clouds of spray, combined with the peculiar swing of the vessel, compelled particularly women and children to seek protection and comfort inboard.

A few of the men remained on deck, and among them Dawney, who was fascinated by all that he saw, and from that evening became a close and studious observer of everything about him. Next day, and the next, and throughout the many days following, he became companionable with the seamen, watched their work, and whenever they would permit, gladly shared their labours. He tried to master the mysteries of knots, bowlines,

Digitized by Google

bights and splices, and came in time to discriminate between overhand knots, marling-spike hitches, inside clinches and snaking, short splices, eye splices and horse-shoe splices. He learned by heart the names of all the sails and ropes, and patiently inquired into the difference between wearing ship and tacking ship. When the fore-and-aft sails were taken in, leaving the head-sails, and when the helm was put up and the mizzen-topsail shivered, he gradually understood what it meant. He grew so intimate with the men before the mast that when he had his oilskins and sou'wester on in dirty weather he had more than once been mistaken for one of the crew, and even the mate at times had failed to recognize him, and had ordered him aloft. When thus commanded, with the cheery "aye, aye, sir," he unhesitatingly jumped into the rigging, and shrouds and ratlines were as though made for his nimble feet. He often was the first to reach the main royal yard, and there with his toes on the foot-rope he would carry himself as fearlessly and as skillfully as the best.

Furling, reefing, shortening or striking sail came with equal ease to him, and he rarely mixed clew-lines with bunt-lines, or by similar blunders exposed himself to the contempt of the mariners as a land lubber. The men liked him and though they knew from his talk that he was something of a gentleman, they voted him a jolly good fellow, and whispered among themselves that he had the making of an admiral in him.

Finding in this way much to occupy his mind, Dawney had not particularly noticed how the days had multiplied. When the vessel was off Ushant, when she tossed about in the Bay of Biscay, and literally rolled away from Cape Finisterre, he had been made painfully conscious by the sufferings of others, that the progress was excruciatingly slow, and that each morning was to be dreaded and each evening blessed. But as the South Atlantic was penetrated, with its calmer seas and warmer temperature, and as he became more absorbed in nautical pursuits, he ceased to observe how days were growing into weeks.

Digitized by Google

He was, therefore, not a little startled when he was told by the second mate that they were in latitude 34° 49′ 15″ South, that the Cape of Good Hope lay on their larboard bow, and that soon they would be breasting the waters of the Indian Ocean. This information roused him from his pleasant self-oblivion, and he began uneasily to compute how long it ought to take the ship to complete her voyage.

Australia was far distant yet, and though the seas to be traversed were not as extensive as those that had been compassed, and though, as the season of the northern Monsoon had arrived, the weather might generally be favourable, still considerable time would elapse before the desired haven could be made. In the meanwhile, as the vessel kept on her southerly course, steering well away from the Mozambique Channel, from Madagascar, and from the islands of Bourbon and the Mauritius forming the southern edge of the more northerly archipelago of the Seychelles, a crisis occurred which brought Dawney's schooling in the arts of seamanship to a close.

There had been no small degree of dissatisfaction among the steerage passengers almost from the very hour of sailing, with the provisions made for their accommodation. The food was unpalatable and often offensive, the water was stale and dead, and the bunks unfit for human beings. Complaints had been made, timidly and apologetically, and afterwards more urgently and sharply. They had at first been met with promises, and then with threats. The poor people did not know what to do. Direct appeals to the captain had not been permitted, and as he was a stubby, stuffy, fussy individual, with a bullet head and a bull neck, whose legs were short and whose chest was large, as if he had expanded the latter through much speaking trumpet exercise at the expense of his lower extremities, and as he was never really sober though never drunk, but always a sheet or two in the wind, not much prospect of relief lay in him. Nevertheless some of the women persisted in demanding an audience of the commander, who rarely left the poop-deck,

Digitized by Google

and who was not very communicative even with his own officers.

They had been less able to adapt themselves to their hard luck than the men. There had been much sickness among them, and the women's compartment had been as stifling and as unendurable as any other. At last their condition had become so intolerable that they determined, at any cost, to make their needs known to him who had the power, as they believed he had the means in the cabin lockers, to afford them some degree of relief.

And so it fell out soon after the ship had entered the Indian Ocean that the female emigrants one day towards sundown swarmed aft and confronted the captain in his own sacred domain. The second mate and the boatswain, who were remonstrating and attempting to stay the invasion, were pressed forward as the crowd advanced, while a few of the male passengers ventured to follow close behind. The commander faced the intruders, and addressing the officers, shouted at them as though he were ordering the helmsman to edge away or to put his helm hard-a-lee: "What in the devil's name are you doing to let this rabble, curse 'em, come here? Don't you know that all this is against the rules? Get them away sharp to their quarters——" But before he completed his vociferous sentence, a motherly woman stepped out from the ranks of the company, and in a broken and trembling voice meekly expostulated:

"Excuse us, sir. The mate's not to blame. He has done all that he could to prevent us from troubling you, but he couldn't restrain us. We were just bound to talk with you and here we are."

"And here you are," the captain savagely growled, "and what do you want, now that you are here?"

"We are here to tell you that we are weak, thirsty, hungry, that the food's unfit to eat, that there is not even enough of that, and that our sick are dying slowly for lack of nourishment."

"And I tell you it is a lie. The ship's well found, and you have been better cared for than ever you were

Digitized by Google

ashore. Go for'ard, I tell you. I will listen to no more of your d——d impudence."

"But," the woman persevered, the tears choking her utterance, "what shall we do with the dying? Oh, sir, remember, we have already buried three children at sea."

"Well," he stormed, "what then? Don't the parsons say they're better off? What would you have? We've got no delicacies for you, and if we had, you and the likes of you wouldn't know what to do with them. I'm no greenhorn. I've sailed these seas many years, and I know emigrants as well as I know navigation. You never can please 'em. They're always grumbling. Nothing is good enough for 'em. They turn up their noses at lobscouse and ship-bread, and must have wine and soft biscuit, and what not. They are all a bad lot, and the cargo I have of 'em on this voyage is as bad as any I ever shipped. Go for'ard, I tell you, go for'ard without any more jaw, or I'll put the whole of you on short rations."

He had talked himself into a hurricane of anger, and stamped about the quarter-deck as fiercely as he could with such meagre legs, and as he saw that the petitioners hesitated to move, he roared at them: "If you don't go lively now, I'll call the crew aft and you may get handled roughly."

"Shame, shame, shame!" the women murmured in reply, and encouraged by their example some of the male emigrants echoed: "Shame, shame, shame!"

"What's that you are saying?"

"Shame, shame, shame!" repeated the voices with greater clearness and decision.

"Who dare say that to me? If any of you men insult the commanding officer of this ship I'll pay you out. I'll keel-haul you, I'll mast-head you, I'll put you in irons." The captain had reached the tornado stage of passionate wrath, and after this outburst there followed a dead silence. "I knew," he continued fiercely, "that you were a lot of curs, and now get off the deck or I'll kick you off."

Digitized by Google

Another momentary hush that seemed interminable, and then a solitary, quiet voice responded to the challenge:

"Shame!" It was Dawney Macgillivray.

Stupefied by the temerity of the speaker, the captain could not believe his own ears. Never before had mortal answered him back on his own quarter-deck; and now for a stripling to do so was enough to provoke deadly reprisals. He changed colour, sputtered and clenched his fists until the nails lacerated the palms of his hands. While he was thus in the paroxysm of foaming and furious rage, the simple-hearted offender, gaining confidence, separated himself a little from his companions and ventured further speech:

"None of us, sir, has intended to be rude. But when you spoke as you have to women, some of them old enough to be your mother, and some of them young enough to be your daughters, we men, who know of their patient suffering, could not keep back the bitter word. We can't suppose that a sailor would talk harshly to women, and we think you must have misunderstood them. We hope, sir, that you'll set the matter right; and we, men, will ask nothing for ourselves, and we'll humbly apologize and give three cheers for the gallant commander of the *Jack Cade*."

"Oh, you will, will you?" retorted the captain, reddening and quivering. "And who are you, anyway, I'd like to know, who comes a-snivelling and a-preaching to your superiors?"

"Who I am," answered Dawney stiffly, "is my own affair."

"And what you are interfering with," bellowed the irascible captain, "is my affair, and blast you, I'll teach you to mind your own business."

There arose an ominous growl on the outermost circle of the crowd, and unmistakably it proceeded from members of the crew who had been drawn by the excitement to the spot. The captain detected it, and screeched at the top of his stridulous voice: "Mutiny, mutiny!

Digitized by Google

Away with every mother's son of you. Off to your quarters. Let me hear one of you yap or grunt and I'll try my pistols on you."

The very mention of firearms was sufficient to drive the petitioners pell-mell towards the waist of the ship, and the sailors, also, though more slowly, sulkily and sullenly, while the commander taking advantage of the fear he had inspired, called on the second mate to seize Dawney and put him in irons for stirring up mutiny. Instantaneously, and with the directness of an arrow hitting the mark, Dawney sprang to the side of the ship, laid hold of a belaying pin, and swinging himself into the shrouds, cried out: "Have a care there, have a care; I'll brain the man who tries to lay hands on me!"

"Grapple with him," yelled the captain.

"How can I, when he can knock me on the head if I touch him? Don't you see he has the advantage?"

"Well, get my pistols."

"Stop," commanded Dawney, and he spoke loud enough to be heard on the deck below the companion ladder, "you'll murder me, will you, in cold blood? Well, listen. Every one knows in this vessel that I have incited no mutiny, and I can't mutiny myself because I am not one of the crew. Shoot me, and if there's law in the earth and justice in heaven, you'll hang." Having delivered himself of this speech, he ascended by the ratlines to the mizzen royal yard, there to await developments. His agility and the flank movement by which he had outwitted his antagonist called forth smiles and chuckles from the spectators, and hand salutations on the part of the women, which did not promise any immediate change for the better in the position of the offender. The captain followed him with his eyes, and ceasing to bawl and shout, he said:

"Let him be. I'll pay him out. He has mast-headed himself, and we will leave him there all night and all tomorrow without food or water. Place men there at the mizzen shrouds on watch, and if he attempts to come down let them drive him back, and the harder they

Digitized by Google

beat him and kick him the better I shall be pleased, the whelp! And now I'll turn in."

Groups of emigrants lingered on deck, and frequently they glanced upwards, as not a few of the sailors did, to where Dawney sat safely perched watching the heavens and pensively recalling the image of his own Angelica. He could only be seen from the weatherside of the ship, but as she sagged to leeward, and as she yielded to the peculiar swell of the long and heavy waves of the Indian Ocean, his lofty prison in the open could be made out distinctly. There he sat complacently, if not comfortably, knowing nothing of the skipper's devices against him, and yet uncertain what course to pursue.

The silence that reigned oppressively in the solitude of his exalted isolation was only broken by the slight creaking of a yard, the occasional patter of the lacings, the swaying of the halyards, or by the flap and flutter of the canvas, as the vessel was sailing close to the wind, or by the lazy splash of the water, and the intermittent sigh merging into a moan which at times rises from the depths, and to which old sailors give the poetic name—"the call of the sea." A thick and murky darkness gradually overspread the sky, effacing moon and stars, creating formidable shadows, like phantoms flitting about on the bosom of the deep, which ultimately interpenetrated each other and became that black infinity termed an "ocean-night."

Dawney observed with some degree of apprehension the gathering gloom, particularly as it seemed to be shaping itself into a canopy, and to be rapidly descending unpleasantly near the mast's head. And as he cogitated, and as the excited steerage people were crowding below, many of them repeating prayers or making the sign of the cross, a detonating crash of thunder reverberated angrily over the sea. It was as the "voice of God upon the deep," summoning to eternal doom. Groans, shrieks, wailings and appeals to the Almighty arose from between decks, and were answered by another and more appalling peal.

Digitized by Google

The muddy, dingy, ashy clouds frowned and lowered. Then down came the rain,—not slowly and gently, but rapidly and violently. It fell like a cascade or cataract, and literally poured, gushed, deluged. These torrents of water were tremendous and irresistible, and could not have been more overwhelming had the Titans scooped up in their enormous fists immense billows from the ocean and let them fall solidly on the deck of the shivering vessel. The blackness and the drenching were altogether too much for Dawney, and groping his way, he carefully descended from his aerial heights among the rigging. When he had twisted himself out of the shrouds, however, he was surprised to find himself roughly clasped in the arms of a sturdy sailor.

"Hush, make no noise," urgently whispered his captor. "You're in danger." Hurriedly he communicated the designs of the captain, and added: "Go for'ard at once to the foks'le. The watch as far as possible is inboard, or under cover of the boats, and I was left to look out for you. Our men are friendly and they'll hide you. Go to leeward and creep ahead towards the bows; all will be well."

Dawney needed no further or more insistent directions. He hastened to obey, and after cautiously feeling his way past the galley, near the windlass he was greeted by another seaman who led him to the fore-hatch, down which they went into the concealing darkness.

After the rain had spent its fury, the stars shone out, and the illumined night gradually melted into the brilliancy of another day. At an early hour the emigrants were about, and they were not slow to miss the one who had excited their admiration and pity. Where was he? they inquired. He was no longer aloft on the mizzen-mast. Speedily various rumours were in circulation. He had lost his grip and had perished unnoticed in the sea; or, coming down, he had been seized and clapped in irons; or, it was darkly hinted, he had been mercilessly beaten by the second mate and others, and was either dead or had been shut up, bruised and wounded, in some dark hole to die of neglect.

Digitized by Google

These stories grew in tragical horror as they were repeated from mouth to mouth, and from being surmises they became confirmed realities to those who had originally imagined them. The officers of the ship were not unconcerned or uninfluenced by the mysterious disappearance of their victim. They, too, asked questions, catechized the crew, and were anxious to clear themselves of suspicions of foul play. But no one knew, or no one would tell, what had befallen the youth. He had simply flitted, vanished, and traces of his whereabouts could not be discovered. A couple of days were spent in an ineffectual endeavour to put an end to the suspense; but on the third, the thoughts of each one on board the vessel were entirely centred in his own personal danger and probable destiny.

There were unmistakable signs of dirty weather in the sky. The sun set ominously. Its lustre was gone, and it went down like a huge ball of coagulated blood, surrounded by a circle of paler red, and tinting the waves with crimson hues. Small clouds of sombre purple darted about like arrows, lightnings shivered thunderless around the horizon, and as the night advanced the stars became restless and seemed to shoot from their orbits, while the ocean assumed the nasty, greasy colour which betokens the war of elements. The barometer trembled, fluctuated, vibrated, and then sank into the depths, the oscillating mercury emitting faint flashes of light. The wind was light, fitful, irregular and continually veering, but the experienced mariner knew that this was only the prophetic lull announcing the approaching gale. The captain, though more than ever stupefied by strong drink, was not deceived by the momentary quiet, and proceeded vigorously to prepare for the oncoming conflict between nature's violence and human skill and courage.

He ordered the ship to luff, and proceeded to make her as secure as possible by reducing sail, and by leaving her only a close-reefed mainsail, two close-reefed topsails, a storm staysail and a solitary jib. The decks were also cleared of every portable thing, the boats were inspected

Digitized by Google

where they hung in the davits, the emigrants were driven below and the hatches were battened down.

Not a moment too soon had these precautions been taken; for already the fury of the hurricane was on the struggling vessel. Onward it swept, rushing at an incalculable speed, enlarging and becoming more savage and all-encompassing as it enveloped its victim.

Changing from merely a black speck in the distance to a leaden hue, and assuming the shape of a funnel, illumined by jagged forks of lightning, it imprisoned the ship in its terrible bosom. The wind howled, roared, whirled, snarled, bellowed, and tore. Before its devastating onslaught the ship trembled and was taken aback, and when the captain, anxious to keep her on the same tack, put the helm up and hauled over the jib, away went the sail to ribbons, and with it the mainsail also. The sea had now joined with the wind, and rose in tumultuous power, the fall of each gigantic wave yawning like an abyss. There was little that approached regularity in the recurring billows. They rushed together, splintered one another into volumes of shimmering spray, rolled over each other, and then flowed together into a mass of angry, yeasty waters, piling themselves up higher than the main yard, and threatening to smash everything in their way. How could anything constructed by human hands endure the strain of such a seething cauldron, where the waves of the sea were only equalled in force and viciousness by the waves of the atmosphere?

The *Jack Cade* gave speedy signs of succumbing. With the greatest difficulty she had been reduced to bare poles, and she reeled to and fro as uncertain which course to take, whether to plunge east or west, or to plunge in sheer desperation into the fathomless depths. Her decks were wet with heavy seas and drenching, driving rain. Word was passed aft that she was bilged, and the pumps were promptly manned. The seamen with clenched teeth and pale faces worked heroically, and among them Dawney toiled as loyally and earnestly as any. He would not stay in hiding when need existed

Digitized by Google

for fearless service. Clothing himself in his storm gear, and securing about his person his few portable treasures, he joined the crew and shared with them all their perils. More than once he was nearly washed overboard, and he had seen some of his gallant mates swept from the deck.

The hurricane had now reached its height. The wind revolved and swirled with increasing energy, the rain drove and tore with more blinding force, the lightnings flashed more frequently and billows rolled more savagely. When the stress and strain were greatest, and when the commander stood appalled and irresolute, the ship's pumps had to be abandoned as useless, and worse than all she began to roll to windward. At this crisis shrieks, cries, entreaties sounded between decks, and efforts were made from beneath to rend and open the main hatch. The vessel refused to answer her helm, and at the same time she was pooped by an enormous billow, which had lifted itself out of the surrounding hideous watery chaos, had chased the vessel, and now deluged her from stem to stern, carrying struggling seamen on its bosom to their graves, and tearing the boats from the cranes, tossed them madly and sent them splintered into the teeth of the gale. Down came the fore-topmast with a crash. The bulwarks were stove in, and the ship fell off helpless into the trough of the sea.

Dawney was still alive, though sorely bruised, and dragged himself aft to help the captain. There stood the old sea-dog, lashed to the wheel, and draining as best he could a flask of fiery drink. He shook his head at the Scotch youth, and huskily exclaimed: "We shall all be in Davy Jones's Locker in a trice." As he spoke the main hatch yielded, and the imprisoned emigrants swarmed up, praying, pleading, screaming; and as they came the seas, inundating the decks, seized them and engulfed scores of them, and the riotous floods drove back into the steerage those who had escaped, pounded them from above, and drowned many of them even where they had fled for refuge. Dawney witnessed the catastrophe, and tried to reach the survivors of the despairing com-

Digitized by Google

pany, but his endeavours were vain. He himself was hurled to the slippery deck, and as the howls of the blast and the wails of the dying smote his ear, he was lifted up by the wild waters and whirled into the immeasurable maelstrom of destruction. He was conscious of his fate, and in the sickening passage through the air recalled the days that were once so fair to him, and one face fairer and dearer than all others. He felt himself dashed against a hard object floating on the waters, and, after the concussion, experienced a gurgling, smothering sensation, and then—dark oblivion.

And the wind raged more furiously, circled more violently, and sucked the water up into its throat; and in sucking the water, drew up the ship itself, held it for a second or two suspended in the air, and with a mocking wail, in which mingled the shrieks of the doomed and the stifled roll of the thunder, like the beat of the muffled drum for the dead, let it drop into the black and fathomless ocean vortex, whose face on the morrow wore once more the hypocritical smile of sunny calm as though it had never been distorted and disfigured by ungovernable passion, and never would be in the coming years.

Digitized by Google

II. THE DRAMA

"He that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed."

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

I

IN WHICH A CURIOUS CHARACTER APPEARS

NEARLY half a century had passed since the *Jack Cade* with all hands on board had been reported missing, and had then been given up as lost. No tidings had ever reached Europe of her fate, though portions of wreckage, picked up some months after the cyclone, extinguished the last ember of expiring hope.

The friends and families of the unfortunate crew and emigrants mourned for a season, and editorial condolences and criticisms appeared in the press; then new events and fresh disasters, particularly the stirring scenes of the Crimean War, effaced from the public mind the memory of a catastrophe which had carried dismay and the bitterness of death to many a humble home. They who had perished in the ocean tragedy were soon forgotten, and, as the years rolled on, the relatives who had wept for them, were in turn gathered to their fathers. Therefore, in 1900, few persons survived who had ever heard of the foundered ship, and fewer who had any personal interest in the men and women who had gone down with her in the gale.

As for Dawney, none of his acquaintances knew that he had taken passage in her, and consequently, no one thought of him in connection with the fatal wreck. Some of his friends had instituted inquiries as to his whereabouts; one especially had for several years sought him diligently, but no trace of him could be found. These efforts were gradually relaxed, and, indeed, only two or three individuals were now alive who had any recollection of his youth, or of the circumstances which were responsible for his departure from his native land.

Digitized by Google

To all intents and purposes it was as though he had never been. No one looked for him, no one went to the shipping offices to inquire for him, no one prepared a cozy room for his reception, or planned gracious surprises for him, no one wrote letters to him or expected messages from him; and if some venerable weary man, or some gentle, feeble woman, no longer young, ever brought him to mind, it was as one who had been a long time dead.

It was at this period, some forty-eight years after the Edinburgh mystery had terminated so unsatisfactorily in the Indian Ocean, that Pitsligo Tysford wrapped himself in a coarse, worn Highland plaid, and with a convenient stone deftly covered with dry grasses and withered leaves for a pillow, laid himself down beneath the silent heavens to enjoy the sleep that comes to fatigued old age. The air was yet heavy with the heat of an Australian day, and the glow from the setting sun had not died out from the bush. Here and there bordering the plain, and on the edge of the forest, the Eucalyptus, the Bunya pines, and the tall red cedars yet glittered in the splendour of the rapidly fading light. But the night with its chill was swiftly creeping over wood and vale; the chattering parrots were already silent; the flying squirrels, the wombats and the ring-tailed opossum had retreated to their coverts; the solemn hush of evening, which in lonely places betokens the approaching repose of nature, had fallen on the scene, and was disturbed only by a lazy, intermittent flutter of the leaves, and the rush of a belated white eagle seeking refuge from the dreaded darkness.

Pitsligo Tysford was tired. He had tramped many weary miles, staff in hand and with a burden like a pedlar's pack upon his back, journeying from the region of Mount Lyell, in the Stanley Range of mountains which diversify the scenery of New South Wales. Following the course of the Murray, he had passed Albury, and was proceeding in the direction of the Pyrenees to the northwest of Melbourne.

Digitized by Google

He ascended one of the slopes from whose summit the Pacific Ocean can be viewed in its placid beauty, and thrusting his way through umbrageous barriers where noble araucarias are matted together, and where there are thickets of lianes convolvulus, of calamus, and immense growths of parasitical orchids and ferns, he selected a spot where he might rest in peace—an opening rich in lily, tulip and honeysuckle, and sweet with their perfumed breath, from whose centre the processionings of the stars and the gleaming of the Southern Cross were visible. There it was that Pitsligo Tysford prepared his simple couch, there it was that he partook of a pinch of pitchouri for his evening meal, and there it was he slept.

Pitsligo slept soundly in his frayed and faded Scottish shawl, as soundly as though pillowed on down and canopied with silk; and Pitsligo dreamed; dreamed of other days and other climes, saw faces then no more on earth, heard voices that were hushed forever, and shared in scenes which, if they ever were, were long since obliterated from the memory of man. As the phantom figures came and went in the curtained theatre of the soul, there was one that stood immovable, that stood with outstretched hands entreatingly, and that spoke in soft, melting tones, beseechingly. And this is what she said:

"Return, my beloved, return, come back. If you are in heaven, visit me; if on earth come to me; for I need you—come!"

Pitsligo dreamed his dream again, and yet again; but was it only a dream and nothing more? Ah, who can tell? Who can penetrate the mysterious domain of sleep and determine which of its visions is born of lawless fancy, and which is but the revival of previous experiences, and which is the creation of human minds, far-distant, projecting their own thoughts, longings and desires through space into some other mind made receptive by the relaxing influence of slumber?

If an image from the spirit of God can be imparted

Digitized by Google

without sensible medium to the spirit of man, why may it not be possible, spirit being essentially one, whether in the Creator or the creature, for man under certain conditions, of which sleep may be one, to communicate his ideas, hopes and fears to a brother man without the intervention of material signs or sounds? Can wireless telegraphy be possible and the yet more subtle interchange of thought be restricted to objective and tangible means of correspondence?

Pitsligo himself, not gifted in philosophy, and caring nothing for psychical wonders, was strangely perplexed by the very realism of his nightly hallucinations. They were new to him, and opened a new page in his mental history. Only of late had they intruded on his sleep, and by their vividness encroached on his waking hours. Whenever he closed his eyes in slumber, it was invariably to find himself subject to the same impressions, and these were sure to follow him during the succeeding day. Over and over he had demonstrated to himself that they were only unsubstantial fictions, evolved from a mocking and versatile imagination, but then he could not explain how his imagination had been so suddenly quickened into such persistent activity.

What added to their serious import, moreover, was the circumstance that when, on a recent day, he began to pencil a message on a sheet of paper, his hand involuntarily moved and wrote, "Come to me for I need you—come."

The writing was not his. It was more delicate and refined, and when he tried to imitate it he discovered that its reproduction was beyond his skill. What could it mean? He had undertaken to convince himself that his dream had so affected his nerves as to compel him by some mechanical principle, incomprehensible to him, to record what he had heard in the visions of the night. Then why was the handwriting other than his own? No; his solution would not answer. Nor could he bring about a repetition of the phenomenon. He had attempted to do so more than once. The sharpened pencil

Digitized by Google

would not move of itself over the virgin paper, but remained provokingly stubborn in his hand.

There was, however, one moment when it vibrated as though about to begin a word; but immediately it ceased as Pitsligo's attention was concentrated on its action. He was disconcerted by his failures, and the more he experimented without success, the more real the inexplicable summons came to be, and the more imperative its influence over him. The paper with the writing he had preserved, slipping it between the leaves of a small old Bible which he always carried; and it was this paper and these nocturnal fantasies which were responsible for his not altogether willing journey to the chief city of Victoria.

The Southern Cross had faded from the sky, and the first streaks of light were heralding the day, when Pitsligo Tysford awoke from his dreamy slumbers. He yawned and yawned, and gathered his plaid about him as though to sleep again. Then, apparently remembering something, he drew from the pocket of his cheap and overworn nether-garments a magnificent watch chronometer of great value, which he consulted and which decided him to abandon his couch of leaves and grasses.

Deliberately, and not without distress, he rose to his feet and composed his mean attire to something like decent order.

He pushed his long bony fingers through and through his unkempt hair, and used them like harrows to tear apart the despairing tangle of his beard. Then he munched a frugal breakfast of bread and cheese, washed down with copious draughts from a crystal spring, and completed his repast with the merest taste of a powder, made from the leaves of a plant, which the natives had long employed to nourish and stimulate the body when exposed to severe privations. Having finished his meal, he carefully wrapped his thread-worn Scottish shawl round his pack, strapped it on his back, and taking his staff in hand, resumed his tramp.

He evidently relished the morning air and his lonely

Digitized by Google

walk. Whenever the landscape opened before him invitingly he would pause. Often he stopped quite still that he might hear the singing of the birds, or that he might contemplate some unusual grouping of fragrant flowers. His eye greedily drank in each lovely feature of the scene, and his ear each melodious sound. He enjoyed nature, was in fellowship with nature, and though he was gaunt, gawky and gnarled in his appearance, and in his gait ungainly and awkward, nature on her part seemed to have a kindly feeling for the solitary man.

The songsters of the sky frequently hovered near him as though commissioned to cheer him on his way; the tiny, timorous creatures of the field did not skurry from his path, but stood still as though to say: "We are not afraid of you, Pitsligo Tysford;" and even larger animals drew near him in confidence, while the wildest never threatened to attack him. Thus in communion with the outer world, and realizing deeply the blessed sympathy of the outward with himself, he trudged along.

Pitsligo Tysford talked a great deal with himself. He rarely had any one else with whom to talk, for he did not frequent the haunts of men. Unless he desired to forget the art of conversation, he was in a sense compelled to take himself into his own confidence and resort to monologue. This through long years of seclusion, only occasionally interrupted by brief visits to centres of population, had become a settled habit. He chatted familiarly with himself, called himself by name, and debated with himself; and as though two persons were present, addressed the imaginary correspondent with the query: "And what do you say now?" or varying it he would ask: "And what did he do then?" and straightway proceed to answer his own inquiry.

On this day, as he was plodding towards the city, though usually taciturn, he at times talked earnestly and argued with himself, asking what he proposed to do now? Should he yield to the impressions that were im-

Digitized by Google

pelling him to undertake a voyage to the old world? Were he to go, what good could possibly come of it? Who would care to see him? How could he help any one, and who on earth really needed him? Then, would he not feel lonely and strange in England and Scotland, would he not feel unhappy and out of place in mingling with people whose tastes and ways were so different from his own? Why, even for a year or two, disturb his own free, unconventional life, and attempt to adjust himself to the falsities of modern society? But then, there might be some one, who had claims upon him, in deep distress. Was it not mean and base to think only of himself when others had a right to expect succour and sympathy from him? But who? Were he only sure hesitancy would cease.

Might it not be that these dreams of his, and this unaccountable writing were only tokens of a duty he owed, not to some individual in anguish, but to his relatives and heirs, if any yet survived? The thought of heirs amused him immensely, and with a queer expression on his face he inspected his heavy brogans, secured by a bit of string, which looked as if they had never been polished and did not belie their looks, and critically surveyed the rest of his poor attire. Then he chuckled and laughed the low laugh of diverted cynicism, and worked out in his fancy an interview between a ravenous and expectant heir and such an one as himself, gravely concluding the imaginary dialogue with the familiar interrogatory,—" and what would he do then?"

To all the problems which occupied his attention he found no satisfactory answer. He tramped along, however, spending several days in his journey, and continuing his mental disputations just the same. He seemed to be borne onward by an inscrutable force towards a definite line of action, even while he was not convinced of its wisdom, and was not determined on its adoption.

When the country became more settled, and his solitude became impracticable, Pitsligo Tysford sought the

Digitized by Google

nearest railway station and boarded a train for Melbourne, "the Magnificent."

On his arrival there, he took possession of his lodging near the old cemetery where he stayed for several weeks in halting uncertainty, until at last, worn out by his own dubitations, he decided on a course of action, and proceeded to the office of a steamship company on Collins Street. It was manifest, as he approached the desk of the busy clerk, that his threadbare and common garments, and the something about him which suggested the tatterdemalion, had already barred him from the good opinion of that important official.

"What do you want, my man?" brusquely inquired the clerk.

"I wish to see Mr. Warren Emden, the manager," softly and humbly responded Pitsligo.

"He's very busy," came the sharp reply; "if you're seeking information about steerage accommodation to London you must go to the proper department in the basement."

"I'm not concerned at present in steerage rates or anything of the kind," answered Pitsligo meekly.

"Are you begging?"

"No," with a perceptible tone of indignation in the low voice.

"Looking for work?"

"No."

"Then what do you want of Mr. Emden? You must tell me your business, before you can see him."

"Thank you"—and the voice had become velvety and subdued—"but my business with Warren Emden is none of your business. Here is my name," and he scribbled it on a slip of paper; "announce me, or I'll go in unannounced."

The manner of the speaker was not defiant or overbearing or threatening, but composed and modest. As he spoke he approached the door of the private office, but the clerk promptly intercepted him, and excitedly, as though his chief were about to be assassinated, pushed

Digitized by Google

him back and shouted loudly for assistance. The noise of the scuffle brought the chief himself on the scene. He threw open his door and stepping out from his room asked impatiently what they meant by turning his office into a bedlam. Before an answer could be given, however, his eye rested on the old stranger, and he exclaimed: "Goodness gracious, if it isn't Mr. Tysford!" And rushing towards him he sought his hand and warmly shook it, overwhelming him with friendly inquiries. The subordinates were stupefied by such unusual cordiality, and uneasily moved towards their desks. Emden perceived that something was wrong. Pitsligo uttered no complaint, but with the utmost deference renewed his request:

"Can I see you a little while alone?"

"Why, of course you can; my time is yours. Come in. Tompkins, see that we're not interrupted."

"But," replied that worthy, somewhat crestfallen, "the cashier of our bank has an important engagement with you, sir, at this hour."

"Tell him to wait, Tompkins, tell him to wait. This way, if you please, Mr. Tysford, and take care; there's a hole in the mat. Simpkins, hurry up there and bring Mr. Tysford's luggage."

In this hearty way was the lonely man ushered into the well-furnished private apartment of the steamboat manager, and his wretched pack, which he had laid aside on entering the outer office, was borne in after him as carefully as though it contained the price of a monarch's ransom.

What was the immediate subject of conversation between the host and his guest may be inferred from what occurred a few moments after they had been closeted together. Warren Emden partly opened his door, and called the head clerk to him. He was evidently annoyed and excited, and said emphatically:

"Tompkins, you're an ass. I always suspected you were, but now I know it. What led you to treat my friend so uncivilly?"

Digitized by Google

"How on earth could I know he was your friend? He looks more of a gaberlunzie than a gentleman," answered Tompkins, speaking in a deprecatory manner.

"Hush, don't make a noise, Tompkins. But I repeat my assertion,—you are an unmitigated ass. He has asked me as a personal favour not to discharge you or I should send you packing."

"But what have I done?" inquired the aggrieved subaltern.

"Done? What haven't you done? You insulted the chief benefactor of our company by asking whether he desired a steerage passage, or was seeking an alms, and you did your best to prevent him from seeing me when it was of the highest moment that he should have access to me."

"But how could I know this? You will allow his appearance is against him."

"What have you to do with appearances? The real business man can perceive wealth however disguised, and discover a capitalist though it may be his whim to cover himself with rags. It's only the incompetent and stupid who allow themselves to be misled by appearances. Tompkins, you're more of an ass than Balaam's; for his enlightened beast saw an angel in his way, but you, with all your training, couldn't make out a millionaire."

"Millionaire!" gasped the unhappy underling.

"Yes;" and Emden continued in a low, sepulchral voice, as though speaking of a canonized saint,—"yes; he is able to buy and sell you and me and every person interested in this company. He owns more diamonds than half a dozen Indian rajahs, and he has more gold to his credit than most of the larger banks have capital. His possessions in lands, in flocks, and city property are enormous—and, to put it mildly, he is the undoubted master of millions."

The door closed abruptly. Poor Tompkins was aghast. He turned livid. Had he been ordered to immediate execution he could not have been more prostrated with anguish and alarm. If he had been accused of robbing

Digitized by Google

a church, or of sleeping under the sermon of a bishop, or of committing any kind of sacrilege, he could not have felt so depraved and abandoned as he did when he realized that he had offended against wealth; that he, who had been reared to venerate money, to bow and cringe before money, and to regard its possession as the sign-manual of personal worth and excellence, entitling its owner to unquestioned adulation, should have failed in self-abasement before it, was simply monstrous and unpardonable. Crushed and fallen in his own esteem, he crept back to his desk, and, as he sat down despondently, he repeated to himself the comprehensive, but not complimentary, judgment of his chief:

"Tompkins, you *are* an ass."

Digitized by Google

II

THE LODGING-HOUSE ON GOWER STREET

BLOOMSBURY is not now what it was a hundred years ago. When changeful fashion abandoned St. Clement's Danes and Whitehall in the eighteenth century, it took possession of territory owned by the Duke of Bedford, and covered it with spacious mansions, conferring on the newly constructed streets and squares aristocratic and historic names.

This splendour has long ago disappeared. The lordly families have moved away, and their palatial residences, or smaller buildings reared on the sites of the more stately edifices, have been converted into modest caravansaries, apartment houses, and board and lodging establishments, where, at moderate charges, reputable individuals are "taken in and done for."

These public conveniences have been augmented of late by the erection of several ambitious hotels, and among them one of preeminent pretensions, where everything from the cuisine to the waiters is so unmistakably foreign as to awaken more than ordinary solicitude for the survival of the good old-fashioned English food and for the endurance of the dear old-fashioned English customs. Doubtless many of the humbler abodes, where the unnumbered army of transients, as well as the countless host of those who hold fairly good situations in commerce, in literature, in theatres and in schools, find bed and board, are neither unclean nor uncomfortable; but not a few of these domiciles are old and ill-smelling, and often cold and cheerless, pathetically dreary in their faded draperies, their discoloured decorations and in what remains of the tarnished and tattered finery of other days.

Over an establishment of this kind, where cheap, gilded

Digitized by Google

frippery and display were paramount in the parlours, and where an air of dejection prevailed in the dormitories, Mrs. Nancy Gowanlock ruled majestically, if not benignly, in a false hair front of the stiffest of curls, and in a frilled patternless cap of the most illusive and delusive of phantasmagorial laces. Every one knew that Mrs. Gowanlock had seen better days; and who of the many ladies who preside over the domestic felicities of the Bloomsbury district has not? Every one knew, however, that Mrs. Gowanlock had seen better days than the best days of her numerous rivals in business, for her father had been a haberdasher in a small way.

If any one beneath her roof in Gower Street, or any person who had applied at her house for board and lodgings, remained in ignorance of her fallen greatness, it assuredly was not her fault. She had always taken extraordinary pains to inform her guests that she was originally designed for nobler things, that there was a time when the future opened before her with alluring prospects of fame and fortune, and that had it not been for the maleficent influence of some evil genius, or—in a husky stage whisper—for the indiscretion of an early marriage with an inferior individual, she would never have been called on to administer doses of English coffee, and serve out infinitesimal portions of indigestible beefsteak to her highly favoured patrons.

There were occasions when the poetic sentiments and the emotional temperament of Mrs. Gowanlock were too much for her, as when the breakfast was a failure and some irreverent boarder brutally commented on the quality of the meat and the condition of the eggs. At such crises she sobbingly reminded her critics of her decayed fortunes, and hysterically reproved them for not appreciating the privilege they enjoyed of being cared for—at so small a figure—by one who had seen better days. They surely could not expect her, with her antecedents, to be expert in housekeeping, or to be interested in such trifles as muffins, chops and bacon. When such a climax of her many wrongs had been reached, she

Digitized by Google

usually arose from the table with an air of injured innocence, withdrew wearily to her own room, and poured oil on the troubled sea of her soul in the form of a generous decoction of gin and water, more generous, however, in gin than water.

Her husband had only added to her humiliation and grief. When she first met him, thirty years or so before her latter day trials, he was a dashing Sergeant of the line. His regiment had been quartered in the garrison town of Sterling, in which ancient Scottish burgh her worthy father carried on the very reputable business of a haberdasher, and her susceptible heart had easily been captured by the valiant soldier and had promptly capitulated at his summons.

After much campaigning, and after separations and vicissitudes incident to an army life, not the least of which was a bullet wound which left its trace not merely on the outside of the head, but on the inside as well, the brave Sergeant joined his wife and took service as a footman in an important family.

This position he was not able to keep many months. He was continually acting in a mysterious manner, making queer signs to himself, holding imaginary conversations; and the other domestics of the house reported him to the master as one who was either bordering on insanity, or contemplating some heinous crime.

Such goings on could not be tolerated in a stately and decorous establishment, and without knowing the real reason, Dick Gowanlock was politely ushered into the street. No other door opened to receive him. His wife came to the rescue, and putting their meagre savings together they were able to negotiate successfully for the house on Gower Street. There they had prospered fairly well; and yet it must be confessed that Dick was of no special advantage to the enterprise. He could not obtain employment of any kind, and on the premises he was usually in the way, and could only make himself useful by carrying the luggage of guests up and downstairs, or by rendering a few menial services. What he

Digitized by Google

could do, he did cheerfully enough; and thus with his small pension and the few pence he could earn, he was able to maintain some show of independence.

It is not, however, to be inferred that Dick Gowanlock had become an imbecile or a madman. He was neither. Whether due to the bullet-wound, or to what may be described as a natural aberration of the mind, ever since he left the army he had been infatuated with secret societies. Of course, he was a Free Mason. He was a Mason even when in the ranks. He was an Odd Fellow, and held membership in other and various dark-lantern fraternities. He was a B. O. O. Z., also he was a K. G. T., and an A. Z. Z., and he held the station of "High, Awful, and Sublime Potentate" in one mystic community; in another the rank of "Mighty, Puissant Captain-General of Unconquerable Legions"; in another still that of "Beneficent and Supreme Seraphic Banner-bearer"; and in yet another that of "Majestic, Incomparable, Infallible Prelate-Priest of the Celestial Hierarchies."

Had his ambition been satisfied with a modest place within the charmed Masonic circle, or within that of Odd-fellowship, he would have been undoubtedly benefited; but he had developed a mania for every kind of fanciful, erratic, vainglorious and nonsensical organization which hides its futilities beneath high-sounding and pretentious names. The more absurd and grotesquely grandiloquent the society, the more delighted and enthusiastic was Dick. Unfortunately this craze had unfitted him for the commonplace practicalities of life, and had it not been for the sharp reprimands of his better half, and the necessity of earning money to pay his dues, it is not unlikely that his entire time would have been given up to the histrionic performances of lodges, retreats and asylums.

At the worst Dick was only a crank, a harmless and an amusing one, though at times trying and exasperating. He had a way of making fantastic signs to strangers, of seizing men and women by the hand in a peculiar fash-

Digitized by Google

ion, and of looking straight into the eyes of visitors, as though to discover a long-lost friend, a habit not always agreeable and always startling to the gentler sex. Moreover, he acted flightily, when his beloved spouse was not present, whispered, as though engaged in some awful conspiracy, wandered off into obscure nooks, indulged in veiled and dark allusions, and was often discovered going through a most amazing series of motions threatening alike to his throat, his ears, his hand, and to almost every other part of his stalwart anatomy.

With his solemn vagaries Nancy Gowanlock had not a particle of patience, and frequently and abruptly she broke the spell by commanding the "Mighty Puissant Captain-General" to "bring down the traps from the third floor front," or to "hurry up and clean the boots of the gentleman in the small bedroom on the second floor." The "Supreme Seraphic Banner-bearer" never disputed the mandate of the unsympathetic mistress of the house, but as he obeyed he found immeasurable satisfaction in the thought that when the night returned his dignity would be vindicated. For, then, once more, he would pass through an ante-room thick with the fumes of cheap tobacco, and in a mediævally decorated hall, illumined by gas and with a modern desk in the corner for the receipt of dues, he would ascend a painted throne, wear a tinsel crown too large for his head, and be saluted by "butchers, bakers, and candlestick-makers," themselves transformed by the easy device of a little gold and silver, and some blood-curdling symbols, into valiant, magnanimous and chivalrous warriors and illustrious belted earls.

Poor Dick, owing to his domestic humiliations, and to the tremendous burden of perilous secrets which had been committed to his honour by confiding societies, and the preservation of which he had been solemnly assured involved the safety of a trembling universe, sadly needed a friend and comforter. The only one, however, in all the house to whom he could turn for a word of cheer, or for a good-natured and kindly expression of genuine in-

Digitized by Google

terest, was Tina, the housemaid. Not that any of the boarders treated him roughly or abused him. But there was an impassable barrier between his wife's patrons and himself.

They could not but know that he had no authority in the family; and there was nothing in common between him and themselves. Therefore they barely recognized him, and though outwardly civil enough, they rarely communicated with him, never took him seriously, and frequently behind his back were merry at his expense.

In nothing of this did Tina share. Perhaps she had not wit enough to understand Dick's infatuation, and then to her everything was so terribly real, that she instinctively pitied him, or any one else who seemed to be in trouble. Hers was truly a kindly soul, though she did not have the appearance, nor the graces, of a sympathizing angel. She was but a slim slip of a woman, young in years, and not precociously old in the precociousness of the London housemaid.

During most of the day she never seemed to be wholly washed or entirely dressed, for she was continually removing smudges from face and hands, and unceasingly fastening her gown, which persisted in unhooking itself. When she tidied herself and polished herself up, as she did each evening, she was never quite successful in effecting a complete transformation, for a remnant of soot or of stove-blacking usually survived, and her best gown never fitted, but hung on her loosely, as though it might drop off at any moment. Her hair was generally dishevelled, and even when, presumably, it had been carefully arranged, was intractable, unrestrainable and lawless.

Nevertheless, though she had no figure in particular, and though she had acquired the habit of shrugging her shoulders for the sake of being sure of her slippery and slipping garments, when she was arrayed in her evening dress, with white cap and apron to relieve its sombre colour, and with her face relatively clean, she was not wholly without attractions. Her complexion was wholesome, her eyes bright and her smile winsome, and both

Digitized by Google

at odd moments were deliciously and maliciously sugges ive of that desire for conquest which has distinguishe woman, whether princess or cook, from the beginnin and will do so world without end.

Tina had never been profoundly moved at any tim nor had she ever experienced any deep emotion. H life had been essentially a shallow one, not free fro petty cares and perplexing annoyances, but exempt fro those convulsive sorrows which inaugurate a new stag in the soul's spiritual development.

She had never bothered herself about her origin, ha never inquired into the circumstances of her birth, ha never troubled any one with inconvenient questions, an had taken herself and every one and everything about he as she found them, doing by them and with them th best she could. All she knew about herself was that he name was Tina Quaco, that her father was dead, that he mother was alive and employed somewhere, and for number of years had kept her at a country school wher she was taught in several useful branches; that she the had secured her the situation she held at Mrs. Gowan lock's, and now occasionally met her, not however o Gower Street, but at remote points, as Vauxhall Bridg or Marble Arch.

She also knew that her mother was a large and flashil dressed woman; that she would never tell where sh lived; that she was sedulously reticent about herself, an always intent on two things, rarely talking about any thing else:—the first to warn her daughter against th deceitful wiles of men; the second to find out all she could about a certain Mitchie Carfrae, who was one o Mrs. Gowanlock's most esteemed lodgers.

In both respects Tina was praiseworthily submissive to her mother's injunctions. She received no special atten- tions and allowed no undue familiarities. It cannot truly be said that she was prudish, or that the coquettish spirit was dead in her; only that she was on guard against the possible boldness of her admirers. There was more than one humble individual who cast longing, if not loving,

Digitized by Google

eyes towards the area windows where she could be seen in the evening, after she had removed sufficient of the grime and smut to render measurably clear the charm of her face, and there had not been lacking gentlemen lodgers who had whispered tender things in her ears, and had attempted to encircle her with their arms. For the former she had a smile and a laugh, and a melodious though derisive "ooh"—an habitual vocal expression with her—partly alluring and partly discouraging; but for the latter she had a sharp word, an incredulous "ooh," and in one instance a sound box on the ear to remind her adorer of his presumption. Tina was sweetly and yet grimly resolute, and she often said that servant girls in London ought to wear a placard on their backs with the warning printed: "No liberties allowed."

As to the other portion of her mother's instructions she was equally docile. She watched Mitchie Carfrae whenever she had opportunity, and, having charge of his room, she rummaged when she pleased through his effects. In all this she meant no harm and saw no harm. The landlady herself was constantly doing the same thing, and why might not the domestic?

But this constant surveillance of a single individual brought with it a disturbed condition of mind which the girl could not have anticipated and which she did not understand. She gradually came to feel that she had an indefinable right to know where he went and what he did; and she slowly realized that he fascinated her and yet excited her fears. More than once when she had bestowed more than ordinary care upon her person, he had condescendingly complimented her on her pretty looks,—had called her his Cinderella, and had bestowed on her some trifling gift. And when he deigned to notice her, Tina's heart fluttered between gratitude and resentment.

He was to her both a temptation and a terror. She avoided him, and yet desired to go to him. When he had been particularly agreeable, she would rush up to her cheerless chamber in the attic, would cover her face

Digitized by Google

with her apron as if to hide what had occurred, and would puzzle her poor brain to unravel the meaning of her silly actions; and having, at last, to give up the inquiry as quite beyond her capacity, she would laugh to herself, exhaust her dubitations in a lengthy "ooh," and then open the window that she might talk with the chirping sparrows whom she understood far better than herself.

But whatever doubts Tina had of men in general, and of Mitchie Carfrae in particular, her suspicions never extended to Sergeant Dick. She always felt free and unembarrassed in his company. He was not only old enough to be her father, but he was so reserved, absorbed and absent-minded that she knew he had no thought about women, and never noticed whether her face was washed, or whether her dress was in a condition of absolute security. She liked him and trusted him. When he had been more than ordinarily snubbed and scolded by Mrs. Gowanlock, she always found a way to comfort him by a look or a sly touch of the hand; and when late at night he stealthily returned from quaffing empty gilded papier-maché goblets, and from ruffling it bravely with illustrious knights, she invariably saw to it that the weary "potentate" was duly provided with a bit of bread and cheese and a glass of small beer.

He in his turn was duly considerate of Tina; and when his wife was not about he would do, unasked, helpful jobs for the girl; would bring up coal from the cellar, carry the dishes for her, relieve her of burdens too great for her strength. Then, when he had completed the self-imposed task, he would draw back and make a courtly bow, such, presumably, as some chivalrous baron in the times of romance would have made to the enchanted princess whom he had delivered from the ogre.

One morning while Dick was playing the part of chevalier to the housemaid, Mitchie Carfrae himself appeared upon the scene. If he had noticed the comical courtesy of his distinguished landlord, it did not suit his present mood to comment on it, or on the confusion into

Digitized by Google

which his coming threw the harmless mummer. He held in his hand a telegram, and asked Tina, with visible irritation in his manner:

"Why wasn't this message handed to me last night?"

"It came late," answered Tina, slightly flurried, "and you were out; so I just took it up to your room and left it where I supposed you'd see it when you lit your candle."

"How did you expect me to see it?" was the impatient answer, "when you put it under the candlestick, almost as though you wished to conceal it?"

"Why should I have tried to hide it, sir," retorted the girl, her face flushing beneath the smudge, "and what would you've had me do? I can't sit up all night for gentlemen lodgers, who have a latch-key."

"Don't be impertinent, or I'll report you to your mistress."

"Ooh! why do you ask questions if you don't want them answered?"

"I merely asked why you didn't place the telegram in full view," Mitchie responded sternly, "and you have the rudeness to insinuate that I was out all night."

"I never said anything of the kind." Tina drew back and then added stammeringly: "You saw it easy enough when your eyes were open this morning."

"Do you mean to say that I couldn't see when I reached home last night?"

Dick had not ventured to say a word, but seeing that his wife's prize lodger was growing angry, and that Tina was disconcerted and was likely at any moment to blubber, he quietly interposed with the remark:

"You mustn't be too hard on the girl, sir; she has lots to do, and may get rattled sometimes. Excuse me for saying so, sir, but if that message is worth all this fuss, and if it has brought you down-stairs earlier than usual, wouldn't it be well to send an answer? I'll take it for you."

The good sense of Sergeant Dick brought Mitchie Carfrae to himself, and he hurriedly seized his hat and moved to the door, saying:

Digitized by Google

"Right you are, Gowanlock, but it can only be attended to by myself," and without any further comment he hastily left the house, and hailing the first cab he met on the street ordered the cabman to drive rapidly to the city.

When he had gone, Tina, recovering from her agitation, involuntarily exclaimed: "Ooh! I don't see why he should be so upset. There wasn't anything queer in the message."

"How do you know?" returned the old soldier with evident amazement. Tina saw that she was trapped and that an explanation, even though a diplomatic one, could not be avoided. She braced herself for the effort, and looking as innocent and as truthful as it is possible for a London slavey to look, answered:

"When I took the telegram from the boy I saw that it wasn't stuck tight, and as I went up-stairs it just opened of itself and I couldn't help reading—'Ten P. M. *Sovereign Queen* off the Nore.'—Not much to make a fuss about in that, is there? So I licked the envelope and put a candlestick on it to keep it from opening again."

Dick looked grave, and indulged in a prolonged whistle. Tina gazed at him and responded with a significant and penitential kind of "ooh." The Sergeant all at once became thoughtful and thus sententiously addressed the disconcerted domestic: "Take my advice, Tina, and when you've letters or dispatches to handle, hold 'em so blooming tight they won't open of themselves; for if you don't some day there'll be a beastly row, and it may be you won't be believed."

Digitized by Google

III

PREPARATIONS FOR A DISTINGUISHED GUEST

DOWN Threadneedle Street into the old-fashioned and rambling Bishopsgate Street the cab bearing Mitchie Carfrae dashed at a furious rate. Passing Great St. Helen's, it came to a halt a little way beyond an ancient hostelry called the "Green Dragon" and in front of a pretentious office, on whose plate-glass window were inscribed the words: "The Sovereign Australian Steamship Co., Limited." Settling his fare with as brief a contention with the driver as possible, Carfrae hurriedly ascended the steps and entered the building.

"Chowler," he exclaimed, as he reached the counter, and before going to his own room; "has any one notified the governor that the *Queen* was off the Nore last night?"

"Not knowing, couldn't say," drawled Chowler. "Suppose she might have been as we've just heard that she's steaming slowly up the river. But don't think the governor heard of her off the Nore."

"Have you told Mr. Pinchover where she is?"

"Yes—telephoned the governor about fifteen minutes ago; and he answered he'd start at once for Bishopsgate; and he asked why he hadn't been called up sooner."

"What did you say?"

"I told him that I'd called him up the minute I got news of the vessel's arrival, and that if any earlier word had been sent the message must have gone to you, and that you hadn't reached the city yet. Why's the governor so awfully anxious to be the first person to board the *Sovereign Queen*, anyway?"

Digitized by Google

"Ask him when he comes; he doesn't make a confidant of me."

"I only thought," continued Chowler, pointing to a private office, "as you're in there with him that he might have said something to you about it."

"Not at all. He's a mum old mackerel." And with this remark, which did rank injustice to Mr. Jabez Pinchover's usual volubility, Carfrae turned from the desk and sought his own sanctum.

The small apartment which he shared with his chief, and in which much of the business of the firm was transacted, led to another in which the senior member of the house, like an invisible but presiding deity, was supposed to regulate and administer the affairs of the company. It was expected that the head of each department, including the junior partner himself, would call every morning at Mr. Odlum's office and inquire whether he had any orders to give. Therefore, Carfrae on reaching his own room crossed the floor and knocked at Mr. Odlum's door. Invited to enter, he propounded the stereotyped question, and received what was almost a stereotyped answer:

"Yes, thank you, Carfrae, but I've no additional instructions to those already given to Chowler. He knows my mind. But the passenger lists and the freight must be increased. And you young men must get a larger share of the business for us. But I'm afraid I'll have to look into your departments myself. And yet what can I do in my condition, worn down by worry and care and rendered sleepless and weak by a parcel of incapables who are always blundering? But there, Carfrae, you're not to blame, at least, entirely. Go to your desk at once, and don't expect me to help you out of every perplexity; rely on your own judgment sometimes. What on earth will you do when I'm gone? And if I'm not mistaken that event may occur sooner than you expect."

This address, with variations in names and minor particulars, was repeated every day. The clerks knew it by heart, and never ventured any reply. They simply lis-

Digitized by Google

tened respectfully, and when it was ended bowed themselves out, promising to do their best; but after they had retired they indulged in sly winks and comments.

There could be no doubt as to his oddity. In appearance he was short and thickset. His head was large, and his ears, nose and mouth were large as well; his thick, short gray hair stood erect, and his countenance was inflamed with the hues of crusty port and old dry sherry. He spoke in an explosive way, as though each word and part of each sentence were the result of a convulsive movement of the diaphragm, which, like the "kicking" of a venerable musket was more perilous to the speaker than to the hearer. For years he had laboured under two illusions.

The first was that he was slowly dying, that incurable disease was gradually preparing him for the final collapse, and that as no medicine could heal him, so his intimates, and particularly his business associates, failed to make allowances for his feebleness. His other hallucination was that he was the soul and brains of the business with which he was connected, that it depended on him for guidance, and that without him it must inevitably fail.

Consequently he regarded himself as a much misunderstood man, and was proportionately lachrymose and melancholy. But never was individual more deceived about himself than Amos Odlum. He was merely a valetudinarian and a dullard. His brain was always clouded, bewildered, muddled, and no one in his senses ever attached the least importance to his counsel. He had inherited from his father the stock in the steamship company, and his partner, a few years younger than himself, was willing that he should imagine himself anything he pleased so long as the practical direction of affairs was actually in his hands alone. Hence he was constantly befooled into the belief that he was managing everything and every one. Letters, often after they had already been answered, were laid upon his table, and replies that he dictated were never sent. Long reports which he

Digitized by Google

could not understand, and complicated accounts which he could not compute, were submitted to his judgment, and he dealt with them all in the same self-conceited, confusing and crazy fashion.

His partner, Jabez Pinchover, was not above using the infirmity of his senior to his own advantage and to the advantage of the company. The junior had always had an eye to what might prove effectively popular in the administration of business affairs. He thought that it was, on the whole, a good and paying thing that Odlum was a confirmed bachelor, while he was a staid family man; that Odlum was a Churchman of high degree, and he a dissenter reputed to have large investments in the "Nonconformist conscience"; and he regarded it as equally useful to keep the senior out of sight, and to be able to represent him as being difficult of approach, while he, the junior, was accessible to all, and more than willing to grant concessions, if it were not for the unyielding nature of the man who, though unseen, had always the right to speak the final word.

After complying with the custom of the house, and hearkening to the maunderings of Amos Odlum, Carfrae bowed himself out of the room. He closed his door carefully, and made himself secure from intrusion by drawing the bolt. An accumulation of mail matter lay on his desk, demanding attention, but for the moment it was neglected.

In his position as head clerk and confidential secretary he was supposed to have a complete knowledge of the company's affairs, but there were occasions when Jabez Pinchover kept his own counsels and did not see fit to trust him or any one else. This reserve had characterized him all along in regard to the homeward voyage of the *Sovereign Queen*, and had, not unnaturally, excited the pique and curiosity of Carfrae.

What could the governor mean by this unwonted taciturnity? Why was he so desirous of visiting the ship immediately on her arrival? Why was she to lie off in the river until he could board her? These were some of

Digitized by Google

the queries which suggested themselves to the inquiring and suspicious mind of the secretary.

Carfrae had long watched, listened, and tried to discover something in the life and business of his employer, which would give him some power over him; something which might be used to prepare the way for a partnership in the concern. But while he had found out several minor tricky transactions and had himself consented to be mixed up with them, he had never obtained a clew to any wrong sufficiently comprehensive and picturesque. Still he was not without hopes that something would turn up, and that he might yet be able to place his finger on the weak spot in the character and conduct of his chief.

As he was cherishing such expectations it was no more than natural that he should be disturbed by Mr. Pinchover's reticence, and that he should suspect the existence of some scheme in which his own interests or those of the firm might be seriously involved. He mused and reflected, walking around restlessly and stealthily. At last his halting will reached a decision. He approached the private desk of Mr. Pinchover, and taking from his pocket a curious key, he opened the desk and from a particular pigeon hole drew forth a letter. That he had invaded the privacy of his employer in this manner on previous occasions was evident, for he knew exactly where to look for what he wanted. This was a communication marked "Australia," and signed Warren Emden, which he proceeded hurriedly to read:

"DEAR SIR: You will remember when some seven years ago the great financial collapse in Australia wrought widespread ruin, diminishing values enormously and imperilling the solvency of the Sovereign Australian Steamship Co., that our house was providentially saved by the generous action of a single wealthy citizen. He placed at our disposal cash to the amount of £200,000. This money tided us over the crisis and immensely increased our credit. The principal has never been demanded, and the interest has been left to accumulate.

Digitized by Google

"Judge then of my anxiety when several months ago our creditor suddenly appeared at our office. Since the time he lent us the £200,000 he has called occasionally, has inquired into his account and has expressed himself warmly towards our company. But he has not been near us for a year or more, and when he did come and we were by ourselves, he informed me that he had made up his mind to visit England. I hastened to assure him that we would reserve for him any accommodations he desired. This, however, was not to his liking. He said that he wanted to purchase a steamship, so that he might journey to England alone, as he did not care to be annoyed by company.

"I suggested, after I had recovered from my surprise, that a steamboat would cost him at the least £200,000. 'Well, suppose it does, what then?' he answered. 'Your firm owes me that amount, and I think I can scrape together enough cash to pay the running expenses of the vessel.' Further conversation ensued, and at last we came to this agreement: The money in question is to remain in our hands, and a promise is given in writing that, should he so decide, the title to the ship he sails in shall be vested in him on his arrival in England. He is to be treated, however, as owner from the moment he takes personal possession, and to be free from every kind of interference while on board. The expenses of the voyage he shares with us, and as we have to pay the wages of the crew and find the ship, he consents that we shall take all the cargo we can get and so guard ourselves against loss.

"He would have sailed earlier, but vexatious delays have occurred, due in part to his extraordinary vacillation, and to unexpected complications in the management of his enormous wealth. But it has finally been decided that he takes passage on the *Sovereign Queen*, leaving three weeks from now and landing him on your shores late in your English autumn.

"As I have intimated, he will be the only passenger. None others will he permit to sail with him, except a

Digitized by Google

family of poor people who are returning to England for the sake of seeing a mother who is afflicted with a fatal disease. He has directed that these indigent persons are to be placed in the second cabin instead of the steerage, and in the name of the owner their passage money is to be returned to them when the steamer is at sea.

"You will perceive from these doings that Mr. Tysford is a remarkably eccentric individual. He is the largest landholder in Australia, New Zealand and the North Island, and his flocks are uncountable; but in addition to these resources he has others apparently inexhaustible. Every once in a while he sells in Melbourne magnificent diamonds, such as are only procurable in South Africa, and repeatedly has he brought to the city big nuggets of gold.

"Many rumours are in circulation regarding the uses to which he puts his enormous wealth. Some persons assert that he is a miser, a morose hermit, whose greed has deadened all human feeling. Others declare that this opinion is unjust, and that in quiet and unostentatious ways, as he wanders up and down the land, he is continually helping the impoverished. Be that as it may, such as he is, Mr. Pitsligo Tysford will soon be on your shores, and, if you manage well, will be there as your guest.

"He will have over £2,000,000 to his credit in London, and can as easily have as much more as he wishes. As he has no kith and kin that I have ever heard of, there is no reason why he should not be persuaded to support you and the Duke in your new ventures. Only remember, you must move warily. Mr. Tysford is peculiar, peculiar in his dress and peculiar in his habits, and though gentle and inoffensive, he would hardly be mortal, if, conscious as he must be of his vast fortune, he quietly submitted to criticism or tolerated officious interference in his affairs. Therefore, be on your guard. The Bible somewhere says, 'He who loves much, to him much shall be forgiven'; but in this commercial age the wealthy man has a version of his own to which society

Digitized by Google

subscribes, 'He who possesses much, to him much must be allowed.' Do not forget this, and I am sure you will ever be grateful for your acquaintanceship with Mr. Pitsligo Tysford.

"Yours truly,

"WARREN EMDEN.

"P. S. I shall direct Captain Aylward not to dock the *Queen* until you have boarded the vessel. He will remain in the river until you come off in a tender. Keep your guest to yourself, and away from newspaper reporters."

Mitchie Carfrae, having finished the perusal of this lengthy communication, restored it to its place in the desk of Jabez Pinchover, and sat down and fumbled aimlessly the many letters which had been brought by the morning post. Several of them he cut and spread out, but he was not disposed to read any of them. He ruminated, pondered and revolved over and over again what he had learned from the letter Jabez Pinchover had so carefully kept under lock and key.

"So there is a new venture," he thought, "and a Duke in partnership, eh? Why may not this millionaire be as serviceable to me as to the governor and this Duke—Kincardine, doubtless? Very likely this Tysford is an ignorant upstart, who returns from the Colonies determined to dazzle London with vulgar display. A whole steamboat! Must sail his own ship! Unwilling for ordinary mortals to share the vessel with him, is he? Oh, I can see him, pacing the deck, strutting about in his gaudy apparel, and expecting on landing to be interviewed by admiring reporters. Well, Emden has taken care to deprive the plutocrat of that pleasurable notoriety. I'm glad of it. The governor expects to monopolize him. All right! But this is my chance too and I mustn't miss it.—I can't miss it if I'm only watchful and determined."

"Hello, Carfrae, what have you bolted the door for?"

Digitized by Google

broke in a resonant, chesty voice, and the speaker rattled the knob in his vain attempts to obtain an entrance.

"At once, sir; really I had forgotten," replied Carfrae as he hastened to admit Jabez Pinchover. "I wished to prevent interruption while going over the correspondence. I often shut myself up in this way, so that I can give my undivided attention to the mail, and I had become so absorbed that I had quite overlooked the fact that the bolt had not been withdrawn. Excuse me!"

"Yes, yes, but gracious me, there is no need for such precautions. We have no secrets, you know. And your extreme care may excite unwarranted suspicions, either against the firm or against yourself."

"Me, sir!"

"There, there, don't get excited. This is an evil world, and the best of us may be unjustly suspected. Never invite criticisms. You understand, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," answered Carfrae deferentially.

"Very well, very well, no more bolting of doors. All the world is welcome to inspect the affairs of Odlum and Pinchover, Limited. Everything with us is open and above-board, and we've nothing to hide. We are Christians, and don't care who knows it, and the Establishment and Nonconformity are kept constantly before us in all of our business transactions."

"Quite right, sir," responded the offending clerk in tones of deep contrition; "and shall we take up the correspondence now?"

"That's just what brought me here, and I can remain only a few minutes. You and Chowler," and then with a peculiar intonation in his voice,—"with Mr. Odlum's advice, must relieve me of all responsibility to-day. I only stopped to say this and to ask you about a wire announcing the arrival of the *Sovereign Queen*. It ought to have reached you and have been transmitted to me last night."

"I'm sorry, sir; the message addressed to the company was sent me, but through the blundering of our housemaid it wasn't handed to me until this morning."

Digitized by Google

"Too bad, but never mind that now. Perhaps I ought to tell you that a distinguished citizen of Australia, I may say the most distinguished, that is, out of office, has come over in the *Sovereign Queen*, and is to be my guest for a few days. His importance is such that I feel I must receive him in person, and, therefore, I am hurrying to meet the steamer. I shall not return to the office to-day, but shall accompany Mr. Tysford to my residence, where he will make his home as long as he stays in this country."

"Sagacious governor, he will take every precaution that no one exploits the unsuspecting millionaire but himself," thought Carfrae, but he only said: "Can I be of any service to you, sir? I will gladly accompany you and sit up to-night to attend to the mail, if you think I can help you or your distinguished visitor."

"Dear me, dear me, that is very considerate of you, Carfrae, but there is really no necessity for you to put yourself out. All I have to do is very simple, and my brougham and the servants are to be on hand to care for the luggage, and to look after the comfort of Mr. Tysford. But thanks, many thanks, just the same. And now I must be off. Explain to Mr. Odlum my absence, and if anything unexpected occurs, call me up this evening on the telephone."

Away he went with chest expanded and head erect, smoothing with one gloved hand his close-cut gray side whiskers, and buttoning with the other his black frock coat, adorned with a flower, and smiling broadly and benignly beneath the brim of his highly polished silk hat. Carfrae also smiled as he watched his departure, and heard his sharp, pretentious voice giving passing orders to Chowler and the others; but he was not indiscreet enough to explain what it was that amused him and gave him such evident satisfaction. He returned to his desk and in an absent kind of way resumed his task and inspected various letters. As he read, he noted memoranda for replies, and went laboriously and systematically through his work. Near the last of the many com-

Digitized by Google

munications one came to his hand, whose superscription was in a woman's writing. It caused him to bite his thin, bloodless lips and frown. He tore open the envelope and read:

"Dear Mitchie: Let me know the earliest moment you can meet me near Shakespeare's Monument in the square. Important. Laissina."

Carfrae crushed the brief message viciously, and leaned back wearily in his chair as he mumbled to himself: "Confound her, what can be in the wind now? I might have known that the promises of a Laissina would prove as frail and brittle as—herself. I suppose I must answer or—— Let me see!" Mitchie Carfrae drew his scheming head down. He shrank his scrawny neck into his spare and scraggy shoulders, interlaced his lank fingers, clasped his bony knee with his thin hands, moved it up into close proximity to his peaked chin, and, as he swayed gently to and fro, thought, and thought, and thought.

Digitized by Google

IV

PITSLIGO TYSFORD SAILS FOR THE OLD WORLD

EARLY in the morning of the day that the *Sovereign Queen* left Australia, Pitsligo Tysford appeared on the landing at Melbourne. He had made no change in his apparel, and, in addition to his plaid and pack, carried only a medium-sized leathern box, which might have contained a few precious articles, or a brace of large duelling pistols.

Without hesitation, he proceeded in his leisurely, absent-minded way to the gangplank, and slowly ascended. As soon as he reached the top, however, and was about to step on the deck of the steamer, a gruff, though not unkindly voice, arrested his further progress.

"Avast there, old chap, what do you want?"

"Passage to England."

"Can't accommodate you. Ship's full, full to busting, overcrowded, don't you see? There's no room aboard, particularly for poor folks, old man."

"But what shall I do, then?"

"Don't know. We've suddenly become quite aristocratic and *bung tung*, we have, and mustn't have no fellers in the steerage anyway; an' as for the saloon, it's crowded with one man who must be a dozen times bigger'n Dan'l Lambert, or is such a swell three-tailed bashaw and grand mogul of a Rear Admiral that nothin' smaller'n all outdoors is big enough fer him."

"But," meekly responded Pitsligo, "perhaps——"

"There, there, that'll do. It's none o' your business and none o' mine either. You must go down, I tell you. We're busy an' I can't talk. Just take your kit and be off."

Seeing that there was no use in attempting to argue with

Digitized by Google

the seaman, Pitsligo did as he was ordered. He trudged down the gangplank, and seating himself on his pack made himself as comfortable as possible.

In no way did he betray agitation or confusion or irritation. He even smiled at the situation, and began to talk in undertones with himself, and imagining that the vessel might go on her voyage without him, he quizzically inquired: "And what would you do then?"

Before he could shape an answer in his own mind, his attention was diverted by a carriage burdened with heaps of luggage, and followed by a spring-van with more, which drew up at the entrance to the landing. In the coach he saw two women and a man. The man jumped out. It was Warren Emden. Hurrying ahead without looking to the right or the left, he nearly stumbled over the object of his search. Checking himself before he sustained the humiliation of a fall, he was about to rebuke the ungainly individual who had selected so inconvenient a spot to rest, when he recognized the eccentric master of millions.

"What's this!" exclaimed the agent, "you sitting here, Mr. Tysford! I came to look for you. Why didn't you go aboard?"

"I tried," replied Pitsligo in his measured way, "but a big sailor up yonder ordered me off, and was too busy to listen to an explanation."

"Blunderer, and yet——" but just here Emden broke off abruptly, as though he thought what he was about to say would not be agreeable to his patron. He swallowed the daring criticism that had risen involuntarily to his lips.

"You must excuse him. Come, let me show you the way," he continued. "Orlop, there, send a hand down to carry Mr. Tysford's luggage."

"I can manage very well, thank you."

But no; he was not permitted to help himself. A sailor was by his side in a moment, and relieved him of his simple burdens. Emden took hold of his arm, and led him with the utmost care up the gangplank, at the

Digitized by Google

head of which stood Orlop, the boatswain, who, as he touched his hat, was astounded when he saw the captain approach and salute the "old chap," and heard Warren Emden say: "Captain Aylward, this is the new owner of the *Sovereign Queen*, Mr. Pitsligo Tysford, who sails with you."

Greetings followed, which were received by Pitsligo modestly, and then the little group moved aft and entered the grand saloon. The stewards looked as aghast as the boatswain had, but with the eyes of their superiors on them they were prudent enough to make no sign. Perceiving that the agent and the captain alike were showing all respect and attention to this singular figure, they accepted the situation and were as obsequious as their masters. They pressed their services on the solitary passenger, conducted him to his cabin or rather cabins, for there were two of them that had been arranged *en suite*, in which a brass bed had been placed, and round which had been arranged masses of beautiful flowers.

Pitsligo was pleased. He smiled on the flowers. He touched them fondly, almost reverently, as one might touch a virgin's forehead, and he sat down contentedly among them, as though he understood them and they understood him. His head he uncovered, as a courteous gallant would take off his hat in the presence of a fair woman, and his eyes were moistened with tears, as one weeps when some fragrant gift reminds him of blessed and gracious fellowships he is compelled to leave behind, and which he may not live to renew again. Warren Emden noticed this softened mood, and took advantage of it to approach him on a matter which was worrying him exceedingly. He said:

"You must excuse me, Mr. Tysford, but I am compelled to ask another favour."

"Well, what is it?"

"We are in a quandary. A great actress who has been starring in Australia, some months ago engaged passage for herself and maid by our steamer sailing on this date, and now threatens us with a lawsuit if we do not fulfill

Digitized by Google

our contract. She will not listen to reason. An engagement has to be honoured in London by the lady, and she declares that the lessee of the theatre, as well as she herself, will exact heavy damages if it isn't kept. Now, will you so far abate your rights as to permit her to voyage in the vessel to England?"

Pitsligo was about to answer "No," when he recalled the burly form of Orlop and his outspoken reflections on the "swell three-tailed bashaw," and he only inquired: "But if we declined, what would she do then?"

"Gracious me, such a lady as she is, a famous tragedienne, who imagines herself of more importance than the Queen of England, what might she not do? She might give the company no end of trouble, and set a lot of rapacious lawyers on the rampage to recover damages."

Pitsligo Tysford was not at heart an unkind man. He had already conceded to a poor family the privilege of journeying in his vessel to the mother country, and seeing the perplexity and distress of Warren Emden, he was not stern enough to withstand his appeal. Therefore he said:

"If it must be so, then let it be so. I will consent to this performer and her servant going with this ship on these conditions: You will return their passage money and inform the women that they must not seek to be introduced to me, and that they must not speak to the owner or come near him. You may add anything you like. You may tell them I am uncouth, savage, a woman-hater, or whatever else that will keep them away."

Emden, delighted, was profuse in his thanks. Pitsligo observed his satisfaction, and was himself pleased that he had been able to gratify the worthy manager, although the consent he had given was granted somewhat churlishly. As Emden was moving away to communicate the decision to the women, Pitsligo said:

"You will be busy completing arrangements for my not overwelcome guests, and as the ship ought to clear as soon as possible and I do not care to come on deck,

Digitized by Google

let me say good-bye to you now. I'm a poor speech-maker, and rough at times, but I thank you for all the pains you have taken on my behalf. In this envelope you will find a little present of a £100 to do my talking for me; and under cover of this other there are £20 which I ask you to give to Tompkins. Give him this trifle and ask him to memorize Burns's 'A man's a man for a' that,' and I'll have him repeat it to me when I return."

This little speech, and the two soiled and crumpled envelopes quite upset Warren Emden. His intercourse with Pitsligo had been governed entirely by business principles. Not a single friendly or sentimental consideration had entered into the bargain he had made, and even the flowers he had purchased were with him only part of a strictly mercantile transaction, which in the end were expected to yield a calculable pecuniary profit, just as multitudes of other flowers displayed at weddings and funerals have often represented nothing higher than some form of worldliness in the donors.

Warren Emden was not quite sure whether Pitsligo Tysford was in earnest, or whether he was slyly mocking him and his endeavours. Still, there was no other course open before him than the one he took. He accepted the gifts, was voluble in acknowledgments, and with expressions of good-will withdrew.

As soon as he was gone, Pitsligo drew the bolt to shut out intruders, and then he began to unpack and make his preparations for the voyage. The disposition of his effects did not consume much time. His wardrobe was scanty. Two or three woolen shirts, a rubber waterproof, several pairs of tattered woolen hose, a Scotch bonnet, an oilskin cap, a few coloured pocket handkerchiefs, made up his outfit. No linen shirts and collars, no broadcloth garments, no silk underwear, not even a comb and brush, or other genuine personal comfort, relieved his entire kit from the suspicion of being the property of a tramp. Its owner, however, did not appear to be conscious of its shortcomings, but treated

Digitized by Google

every article he handled gravely, and as if it was in no wise unsuited to the needs of a millionaire. He was especially careful of his leathern box. That he placed out of sight beneath his bed.

When he had finished his arrangements, he returned to his seat among the flowers, and undoing his coarse shirt he drew from his hair-covered bosom a golden locket, adorned with a jewelled monogram, about as large as the palm of his own hand. It was enwrapped in a bit of discoloured parchment on which was a curious diagram, and it was suspended round his neck by a massive golden chain. He removed the parchment and unclasped the locket, disclosing a piece of delicate cambric, yellow with age, jealously preserved under a glass cover. Pitsligo looked at it, and looked, and looked.

"Ah, me!" he sighed, "only that left; all gone, withered, dead. Only a crowd of graves in that distant past, graves perhaps neglected, overgrown with weeds, and without headstones to distinguish one sleeper from the other!"

The voyage to England was commonplace enough; and in all the run north of the Seychelles to Port Said and the Mediterranean, nothing occurred to occasion excitement or to awaken alarm. One day was very much like the other, and the routine of the ship was performed with the most exact and exacting regularity. The bells fore and aft announced the passing hours, the log was posted every noon, the meals were served with painful punctuality, and the assuring cry of the lookout, "All's well," sounded with cheering monotony through each successive night. Pitsligo was soothed by the unvarying order and the unbroken calm. He rose early, he retired late. The sea appealed to him as a friend, that had its own way of communing with his soul. He never felt alone in his solitary walks on deck, as the sun was rising or the stars were beginning to disappear. The swish of the spray and the swirl of the water, the idle splash of the waves and the gurgling cataract sounds in the wake of the ship, were as musical to him as a symphony, and as mystical and enchanting. He would creep away by

Digitized by Google

himself under one of the boats and listen, interpreting to himself the solemn harmonies which saluted him; and when for a moment or two they all died away, the awful silence itself became vocal, and in the stillness he could hear the spirit of the ocean lamenting the crimes it conceals, the treasures and hopes it entombs, and the miseries and horrors which by an uncontrollable fate it is driven to inflict.

Captain Aylward and the other officers of the ship refrained from intruding on Pitsligo's privacy. He went where he pleased and every one treated him with respect. Yet it was next to impossible that this seclusion should be absolutely inviolable. Two or three days after the steamer left Melbourne, it was unexpectedly invaded by one to whom no language could have made clear either its nature or necessity. The daring and unconventional aggressor was a little girl, the child of the poor people, who on account of their melancholy errand had been favoured by Pitsligo with a free second cabin passage to England. She had observed the lonely and poorly dressed old man with a child's curiosity and commiseration. Encouraged by his harmless appearance, she drew near to him one day, and putting her tiny hand on his arm, inquired earnestly:

"Be you grandpa?"

"No, my child, I have no grandchildren. Why did you ask?"

"Dad told me that a good grandpa was letting us ride with him all the way to England for nothing."

"Umph, I'm sure he ought to be glad to let a little girl like you ride free."

"So you's not grandpa. S'pose dad's right. He says"—and here the charming tot lowered her voice—"that the grandpa is a big rich man that lives all by himself in a cabin and has lots of servants waitin' on him, an' wears a silk nightgown, an' a golden hat on his head. Mustn't he be splendid, though?"

"I'm thinking," replied Pitsligo rather ruefully, "your dad is not disposed to be complimentary."

Digitized by Google

"Com-pli —— What's the rest of it? Lena can't say long words, an'——"

"Never mind, Lena, if that is your name, and don't trouble your little head about the rich grandpa with his golden hat. It must make his head ache terribly, and if it does he's very likely both cross and ugly."

"Lena would like to peek through the keyhole and see him. Dad showed me a picture of King Herod in the Sunday-school book. The king was sitting on a yellow chair, and pink men in blue dresses were kneeling and shouting, and dad said the worms were a-goin' to eat him all up. Then he told me that's how the grandpa looks."

"Worms and all, I suppose," responded Pitsligo gloomily.

"No," continued Lena sagely; "you ain't the big grandpa. You's hair ain't combed, and your boots is dirty, an' your beard is just like our terrier, an' he has only towsie hair and two eyes. Then I'm not afeered of you, you knows," and she looked up into his face with childlike confidence, as if she would have him understand that the sense of security she felt in his company must be taken as conclusive proof that she no longer suspected him of being the imposing and glittering grandpa of her imagination, who, while exciting her curiosity, filled her with awe and dread.

After this initial interview the intimacy between the child and the old man increased. They wandered about the decks together. She would bring her painted rag dolls for his inspection. He would obtain from the steward sweetmeats for her delectation. She would climb on his knee when he was musing in his steamer chair, and would cuddle down to sleep beneath his old Scotch plaid, or would attempt, alas, how vainly, with her tiny fingers to reduce his lawless and anarchical hair and beard to order.

He charmed her with stories of Australian kelpies and fairies, and she diverted him with nursery rhymes which she sang in a crooning kind of way, as her mother had

Digitized by Google

often sung them over her cradle. They were usually inseparable for two or three hours each day, and then she would return to her parents, and he would go off again by himself to his meditations. He was not inquisitive, and did not ply the child with questions regarding her father, but from her innocent prattle he learned some things concerning his trials and disappointments, which excited compassion. The parents, on their side, were not curious, and convinced that Lena was well cared for when she was with the venerable stranger, did not inquire about him.

There was, however, one occasion before the ship was drawing near to the end of the voyage, when this indifference was temporarily disturbed.

Coming on deck much earlier than they were accustomed to leave their berths, they saw Captain Aylward approach Pitsligo Tysford and salute him. Then they noticed with what respectful deference the officer listened to the few words spoken by their daughter's friend, and how, when they separated, he touched his cap again. This struck the parents as a somewhat remarkable procedure. They were also impressed by the conduct of the sailors, who scraped and bowed as Pitsligo went by, and who made way for him as if none of them were quite worthy to stand in his presence. Seeing the boatswain, Orlop, among the men who were so obsequious, the father watched for an opportunity to speak with him, and when he obtained it he inquired:

"Say, Orlop, who is that old fellow you and the captain have been bobbing to like so many flunkies?"

"Hush, man, not so loud," responded Orlop, "and don't let on that you know. That 'ere venerable gentleman is the owner of this 'ere ship, an' he's travelling *incognowto*."

The momentary expression of astonishment on the face of Lena's father gave place to one of blank incredulity as he replied:

Digitized by Google

"Tell that to the marines; it won't go down with the genuine salt."

"Marine yourself," retorted the indignant Orlop. "Do you think I've nothing better to do than to spin yarns to such land lubbers as you are? He's the owner, and none other."

"And I say, tell that to the marines. Why, the man hasn't a decent coat to his back, an' his brogans look as though two or three generations had tramped in them before him. I'm poor enough, God knows, but if I were as poor as he is I'd jump overboard."

"Belay there, belay there. I tell you I've told you the truth. He's the owner of the *Sovereign Queen*, an' he's the very nabob what's lettin' you and yours go free in the second cabin instead of the steerage."

"And I tell you I'm not one of the marines," again retorted Lena's father, indignant that any one should attempt to palm off on him such a bare-faced fabrication. "I'm not a marine, and neither am I a zany."

The imperturbable Orlop contemplated him compassionately for a moment, and as he turned on his heel he remarked: "Well, if you're not a bloomin' zany, I'm blessed if you're a Solomon, an' if you're not a marine it's wery creditable to the sarvice."

Digitized by Google

V

THE *SOVEREIGN QUEEN* COMES SAFE TO PORT

THALIA THESPERIUS fretted unceasingly against the restrictions which had been imposed on her by Warren Emden. The more she meditated on the conditions under which she had accepted passage to Europe, the more indignant she became. Why should any living man shut himself off from her, whom lords and great gentlemen had courted and flattered, and for whose smile and favour they had quarrelled and fought?

Thalia Thesperius was not the woman who could placidly reconcile herself to slight or insult. For more than a quarter of a century—ever since she first had "thrilled the public with her unique impersonation of Imogen when only nineteen years of age,"—she had been a popular favourite, praised, puffed and panegyrized by the patrons of the drama in the four corners of the world. Her career had been a succession of triumphs, and applause had become as necessary to her as the glass or two of wine which, after the excitement of the stage, helped to lull her to repose. Then she had so identified herself with the characters she was accustomed to assume, that her own identity was confused or lost, and every offence was dealt with in the spirit of a Queen Katherine, a Lady Macbeth, or an unjustly suspected Desdemona.

Perhaps, too, there entered into this sensitiveness an ill-omened suspicion that her personal charms had waned, and no longer commanded the homage of mankind; and yet she was still attractive. Her hair, though bleached until it had lost every trace of silken gloss or natural colour, was still abundant,—or seemed so

Digitized by Google

to the male admirer; her face, though betraying the blighting effect of powder and rouge, was not without regularity of features and trace of beauty, and when lit up by smiles was expressive and bewitching; and her eyes, though rendered dull and glassy by the reflection of footlights, were still capable at times of flash and sparkle. All this she knew, for her looking-glass revealed it to her every day, and almost every hour of the day. She also knew that her carriage was graceful, her laugh musical, her speech exquisitely modulated, but she doubtless failed to realize that in her voice, in her attire, and in her manner there was always something that advertised the actress.

The attitude of Pitsligo increased her anger as the voyage progressed. He desired to be alone; she made up her mind that he should not be alone. He did not wish her company; she determined that he should put up with her company. He commanded that his privacy should not be invaded; she resolved that she would invade it; she would tame the bear and bring the monster to his knees.

Thalia and her maid found out where his staterooms were located, but they could not break down the door, or even open the door and walk in unbidden. They watched for him, they looked for him, and failing to discover him by day, they attempted to entice him out of his retreat by recitation and song in the evening. Thalia Thesperius would repeat the blood-curdling soliloquy of Lady Macbeth in the mad scene, or the thrilling speech of Juliet in the tomb of the Capulets, but without effect. Pierette Charmartan would bang the piano and sing to her heart's content —

"Oui, je t'aime comme un bel ange
Echappé du divin séjour
Comme le bouton qui se change
En fleur à l'aube d'un beau jour,"

but without response. All their schemes failed to bring him from his den. A few admiring stewards and stewardesses alone enjoyed the performances, and occasionally

Digitized by Google

a weird and uncanny looking old man joined the meagre audience, sitting apart by himself and listening attentively, but that was all.

It cannot be denied there was much in the appearance of Pitsligo Tysford to repel. To a woman like Thalia such a man could be conspicuous only as an oddity, pathetic and repulsive, and serve merely to furnish a text for spicy observations on the spectacle of mildewed, crumbling, moldering, moss-gown, second-hand, and waste-paper-basket humanity in general, and on this specimen in particular. If she had only thought, however, to look into the clear blue of his undimmed eye as it shone beneath its shaggy brow, she might have discovered that which would have commanded her wondering reverence. Could she have seen into his heart there would have been disclosed to her in its motives, ideals and principles an exaltation incomprehensible to her, and usually discredited by the cynicism of her profession. But no man can explore the heart of another, and no woman, either—especially such a histrionic creature as Thalia Thesperius.

As the voyage was nearing completion, the famous actress condescended one morning to address the picturesque and venerable person, who, though so shabby, was at liberty evidently to go where he pleased about the ship, and who, on this occasion, she encountered quite suddenly and unexpectedly on the saloon deck.

"I suppose," she remarked, without any introduction or preliminaries, "that you are anxious for this tiresome passage to end?"

"I'm not sure, fair lady." As he spoke in his drawling, halting way, he politely removed his Scotch bonnet, and stood before her humbly as one who recognizes the presence of a superior. His modesty and courtesy pleased her, and she continued:

"I've seen you at my readings in the cabin. I suppose you're fond of the theatre, and attend whenever you can afford to do so." There was just a tinge of pity in her voice.

Digitized by Google

"No, I don't care for the stage; but I like the drama very much, particularly when I can hear it read by such a gifted reader as you are."

"But surely, you don't object to the stage? And you must appreciate its mission as the school of virtue."

"School of what?"

"Of virtue—don't you understand?—virtue."

"Weel, weel, wha wad ever hae thocht o' that?" he muttered in his beard, betraying familiarity with the Scottish dialect, and then, recollecting himself, more distinctly and in English he replied: "A school of virtue! I never heard of that afore. The theatres I knew long ago were surrounded by public houses; and those I've read of have drinking bars inside, and are frequented by many men and women who have no virtue to speak of, and who are not searching for any in particular. Then the current stories about actresses and their various husbands would lead one to conclude that if the theatre is a school of virtue it has awful dunces for scholars."

"Do you mean to insinuate," hotly responded the indignant actress, "that all who support and all who adorn the stage professionally are disreputable people?"

"Nay, not at all. There are worthy people everywhere. Even John Knox was in the galleys, and John Bunyan was shut up in Bedford jail. But galleys and prisons do not improve the morals of mankind. They are not fitted to foster virtue. All I mean, fair lady—and no offence intended either—is that whatever else the theatre may do for the amusement and delight of society, it is no saint, does not make saints, and ought not to pose as a saint."

"Then I suppose," came the sharp retort, "that you think yourself too good to cross the threshold of a playhouse or to associate with ——"

"Nay, stop, fair lady," Pitsligo answered meekly, "I do not pretend to goodness. I'm a plain man. True, I haven't been in a theatre for over forty years, but then neither have I visited a church. I go to neither. I have no religion in particular, as clergymen count religion,

Digitized by Google

and the beauties of nature yield me all the joys and diversions I need. I never presume to counsel or criticize others. If I have seemed to depart from this rule in our conversation, you will excuse me, fair lady. You were kind enough to speak, and you led me on, and what could I do then?"

He bent his head in a lowly manner before her, as though silently confessing his unworthiness to have an opinion, and his consciousness of her woman's right to have as many as she pleased. She was perplexed. She could not make him out. But as she ended the interview, she added: "I suppose, then, you couldn't be induced to come and see me play in London?"

"Oh, yes, fair lady, I am under no vow, and as you have deigned to notice me, I'm sure I should be gratified to behold you in the glory of your art, and more than gratified to witness your triumphs. But situated as I——" He was merely going to inform her that he could not yet anticipate his own plans and movements, when she abruptly interrupted him, saying:

"Well, it shan't cost you anything. I'll send you a gallery ticket for any night you may prefer."

"You are more than kind, fair lady. A complimentary admission to the gallery! So be it. I will depart from my custom and come."

Thalia, familiar with the varying moods of the human voice, thought she detected in his as he spoke, notwithstanding its subdued and silky smoothness, a touch of gentle irony. He looked so meek and so simple, however, that she dismissed the suspicion and inquired: "To whom shall I address the pass and where?"

"If you will allow me, as I know not where my poor retreat will be in London, I'll forward to you at the theatre my name and lodgings."

"Very well, do not fail to do so, for I mean to show you how unfair your prejudices are."

With a slight inclination of the head, doubtless such an one as she had often given on the stage in the impersonation of some haughty dame, she passed on her

Digitized by Google

way to join Pierette, who had observed her mistress's condescension from a distance. The two women as they moved towards the saloon companion-way instinctively looked back, as every woman has done since the ill-fated experience of Lot's wife, and saw Pitsligo still standing where Thalia had left him. Even after they had disappeared below, Pitsligo, bonnet in hand, still stood, stood with downcast eyes and immovable features, and as he reflected he shook his head dubiously, and a smile flitted like a sunbeam over his face. His meditations, however, were not destined to be prolonged, for the boatswain coming aft, and seeing him uncovered, reminded him that it was not wise to expose himself in so careless a manner to the winds which were blowing sharp and cold.

"Is that you, Orlop?" exclaimed the millionaire, rousing himself from his momentary self-oblivion.

"Yes, your honour, an' you'll excuse me if I say you oughtenter sail under bare poles in such weather as this."

Pitsligo understood his meaning, and at once acted on the hint. He had taken quite a fancy to this man, Orlop Youtsay, from his first encountering him at the head of the gangplank, and had relished exceedingly his sea yarns and personal reminiscences. Repeatedly he had kept company with him on his watch at night, simply that he might hear the mariner talk. There were no actual confidences between the men, for Pitsligo was too reserved to encourage questioning or to volunteer information about himself, and the sailor was evidently too anxious to avoid details concerning some passages in his own life to be in every respect ingenuously outspoken. Still this constraint did not prevent him from being in his own rugged and homely way an entertaining talker. He gave vivid accounts of tempests and of vessels wrecked; he described the customs of various lands, and indulged in acute observations on the ways of Asiatics, with whom he had come in contact in Hongkong, Bombay, Calcutta, and the islands of the sea; he related amusing frolics he had shared when on leave in various ports, and gave descriptions of some not quite so

Digitized by Google

amusing, in one of which he had himself, while yet a lad, been slashed with a knife. Only on one occasion did he seem inclined to speak with freedom of himself, and probably had Pitsligo Tysford been disposed to improve the opportunity he might have learned much more than he did of the more sacred and private affairs of an eventful career.

"You see, Mr. Tysford," he began "I was born some sixty years ago, an' shipped when I was only twelve years of age. My father commanded an East Indiaman, and sailed out of Liverpool. He was a fine navigator, I'm told, but I never knew him. All I know about him is that he lost his ship because he had been drinking heavily an' he went from bad to worse until he was broken by the waves and went down into the gulf. My poor mother took me from school an' apprenticed me to the sea. Thinking she could get more work in London, an' wanting to work where she was not known as a captain's widow, she moved to the big town and tried to keep a decent sailor's lodging house not far from Ratcliffe-highway. Well, she had a rough time of it. The place was a kind of Davy Jones's locker on earth, fouler than a ship's bottom covered with barnacles and weeds, blacker'n a ship's hold when the hatch is on, and more piratical than a ship carrying the black flag an' commanded by Captain Kidd.

"I had a tough time, and had to do like other boys at sea, grin and bear it, hit back when I dared, and swear and drink so that I might soon become an able-bodied seaman. I was getting on in my nautical knowledge, when the old woman was called up aloft an' when I came back from a voyage to Bombay the house was shut, the furniture had been sold, and the money stolen. All I had left was a grave. I remember going there to that grave an' scattering flowers over it, and talking to my mother, promising her lots of things which she had asked me to do and not to do afore I left the last time, an' it was very real-like, just as though she was signalling me and trying to make me out in the mist."

Digitized by Google

"And what did you do then?"

"I spent the little money I had and went to sea again. I was so sober for a time, and attentive that I worked my way up to be mate, and I had made up my mind to get instruction somehow and try to be a skipper. And I would have succeeded but for the drink, an' for the way I had o' cursing everybody an' everything. I was handy at all kinds of oaths an' use-ter let them fly whenever I opened my mouth to speak. More than once I was brought aboard fuddled, an' as long as the rum lasted wasn't fit for duty. Then came the sobering up, an' the horrors. At last no officer would have me as mate, or second mate, an' I was compelled to ship before the mast again or starve.

"I was shipped with a lot of other ragamuffins on a temperance bark, and the master soon had the upper hand of us all. It didn't take him long to make out that I was a good seaman, an' before the voyage was over, as our boatswain was swept from the deck by a monster wave, I was promoted to his place. With returning good fortune I began to take courage, and once more swore to knock off my drinking. But I've never quite succeeded, and I wouldn't 'ave done as well as I have if it hadn't been for my wife."

"So you're married?"

"Yes, an' if ever 'a sailor's wife a sailor's star should be' she's been mine. I'm not worthy on her, sir. She's better educated than I am, an' then she's religious, my, how religious she is! An angel don't know more about the Book than she does, however long he's been to Sunday-school, and she never scolds. She only says: 'Orlop, don't swear, remember me and Fiona'—that's our girl, sir,—'an' keep away from the public house.' An' it's wonderful what a change has come over me. Sometimes I feel as if a typhoon is inside of me, an' I must let it loose. When that spell is on me I send the men away an' get on the lee side of the ship an' just swear it out to myself, an' when the curses are got out o' me I feel as relieved as some folks do when they lean over the

Digitized by Google

rail and let it go. And as for drinking, I don't often get on a spree these days. I can't abear to see my wife look at me when I come ashore, sir, an' she axes me whether I've been boosing in furrin parts. She's very partic'lar, sir, and wants me to put oil on my hair, and to keep clean shaved, an' wear white collars, an' tells me never to forget that I'm a gentleman."

Here the big, burly fellow pushed his fingers under his cap through his short and bristling hair, eyed himself critically all over, and then glancing at Pitilsgo Tysford, added meditatively: "I'm afraid I must get myself docked and overhauled afore the steamer reaches port; an' if I'm not too bold, you looks yourself as though a new coat of paint and a new set of sails would make you more ship-shape in a woman's eye."

"Perhaps, but I have no wife, and no other woman to care for me, or to mind how I dress."

Later on, and as the ship was nearing port, one day Pitsligo broached a subject to the seaman which he had been carefully cogitating:

"Youtsay, when I came on board I brought a leathern box with me. It contains some £5,000, mostly in notes, though there's a small amount in gold. I've decided not to take all that money ashore, and I want you to help me get rid of it."

As he spoke the boatswain breathed hard, and looked at him in amazement. He had never heard of a man in his senses preparing with calm deliberation to get rid of so large a sum.

Pitsligo continued as placidly as he had begun: "I would be pleased if you would take a £5 note to every member of the crew for me as an addition to the wages paid. The officers I'll attend to myself; and, as for you, just put this £50 in your pocket, and say nothing about it, except to the good wife who has been so great a help to you. And, as I've no girls of my own, ask Miss Fiona if she won't make me happy by spending this £10 note for herself and herself alone. She

Digitized by Google

mustn't give her tar-bucket of a father a farthing of it. Do you understand that, you old sea dog?"

If the boatswain was bewildered before, he was now ready to flop down on the deck in a faint. His head was in a whirl, his heart beat hard and fast, and had it not been for a fresh quid of tobacco the collapse might have been complete. As it was, he supplied his mouth with a generous plug of the soothing weed, gulped down some hard substance that had risen in his throat, and contemplating Pitsligo with an expression of awe and veneration on his sunburnt and storm-stained face, he stammered:

"Well, Mr. Tysford, your honour, I never seed nothing like this on the high seas afore, an' I've sailed them many years. You knows, sir, we are told about 'a sweet little cherub as sits up aloft looking out for the life of Poor Jack.' But the darned thing—excuse me, I came near it, I'm so excited—that bloomin' cherub only sits there. I never met him aboard ship; I never knew him lend a helping hand. I never knew him give the men a few pounds each, and I suppose he just holds on to his perch up yonder, as the lookout does in the crow's nest, and little enough use is he there aloft when the ship is sinking and every hand counts at the pumps. But here you comes aboard, not pretending to be a cherub, and you don't look like one anyway, and you just puts your hand in your pocket, and does for Jack, for the fireman and engineers, cooks an' the rest of us just what every cherub oughter do when he engages in the cherub line of business."

"There, there, stop," exclaimed Pitsligo, "and don't talk so much about nothing. What we have to do ought to be attended to at once, and praises and all sorts of blether we can get along without."

So these weighty transactions came to an end, as everything must, and the steamer completed her voyage, and dropped anchor in the Thames a little way below the docks, waiting the arrival of a tender from the shore. Pitsligo, with his staff and handy portable property, sat

Digitized by Google

by himself apart on the deck, aft of the smoke-stack, apparently preoccupied and unmindful of what was going on about him, excepting when little Lena in the exercise of a child's prerogative diverted him from his apathy by a fond caress, or some pert inquiry.

During one of these interruptions, Pitsligo seemed to bethink himself of something he had overlooked, and furtively drawing from his pocket a crumpled twenty-pound note, and wrapping it in a soiled piece of paper, he sent it by the child to her parents. This was the first credible intimation these poor people had received that the big grandpa of their fancy with a golden crown was only a fiction, and that their real benefactor was this forlorn figure. They desired to present their thanks in person, but they were not allowed abaft the funnel. The father, therefore, dispatched by the same sweet messenger who had brought the gift this note scrawled with a pencil much in need of mending:

"I am not ungrateful. In return for your kindness let me say a word of warning—a warning that may cost me my own life. From the talk of the seamen I have learned who you are. Look out for the Larrikins! Take care when you return to Australia! The king of the Black Push in Melbourne has made a decree. If you would know more seek me out in East London at the Ivernia Cottage by Squirries Street. FOYLE SHANE."

Pitsligo read the letter deliberately, and it needed deliberation to make out the contents, which were rendered somewhat illegible by the dullness of the pencil and the poor quality of the paper. He was not oblivious to the seriousness of the warning, but he sent back no reply. Even had he desired to have speech with his correspondent, the approach of the tender and the movements of the crew made it clear that such intercourse would hardly be advisable, and it was not practicable. He, therefore, abandoned the idea of further acquaintance with Foyle Shane, at least for the present, and turned his attention to what was going on about him.

The men, gathering by twos and threes from all parts

Digitized by Google

of the ship, were whispering together, and were acting as though they meditated some breach of discipline. Orlop was among them, clean shaved, his short hair plastered down on his head, and his best sea-rig donned for the occasion. No one observed their movements with more curiosity than Madam Thalia Thesperius, who inferred that the seamen were lining up to honour the owner as soon as he should emerge from his splendid solitude.

Her expectations, however, were all disappointed. Nothing that she had anticipated took place. Instead, she heard the sharp commands of Captain Aylward, echoed by the boatswain, to clear away and prepare to receive the tender. A moment or two after the little boat puffed alongside and screamed to all the river craft the announcement of her arrival. As soon as she was made fast, Jabez Pinchover ascended by the ladder, and was respectfully assisted by the officers over the ship's rail to the deck.

As he stood there, felicitating the commander, radiant with mercantile smiles, immaculate in polished boots, in irreproachable linen, and in scrupulous broadcloth, Jabez Pinchover seemed to have no other business on the earth than to promote the cultivation of affability and of courtier-like graces.

"And how is your distinguished passenger, our good friend, Mr. Pitsligo Tysford?" inquired Jabez.

"He's quite well, sir, and you'll find him sitting yonder on the port side of the deck. I'll take you to him."

"Goodness gracious, captain, I see no one there but a beggarly looking old man."

"Nevertheless, sir, it's he, and he has distributed enough money among the crew on this ship to convince us all that he is as generous as he is wealthy. It's been no easy task to keep the men for'ard, sir, as they have been clamouring to show how much they think of him."

"Dear me, dear me, how very extraordinary! Mr. Emden wrote that he was singular, but I never expected this. I hardly know what to do."

Digitized by Google

"Do," quietly rejoined the commander; "if I may be so bold as to suggest, sir, just go and get acquainted with the man and decline an introduction to his clothes."

Without another word he led the way. Pitsligo was so absorbed with other things that he did not observe the approach of the men. They came right upon him before he noticed them, and when the captain ceremoniously presented Mr. Pinchover, who had come off on the tender to take him ashore, he rose with a kind of dignified humility, and not knowing what else to do, meekly uncovered his head. Mr. Pinchover also removed his hat, and in a hesitating and confused way bowed and extended his hand. As they stood facing each other it seemed as though civilization and the wilderness, the city and the desert, the fictitious and the real, the pinch-beck and the genuine had been brought into conjunction.

These two men, so different from each other, exchanged only a few sentences, and then, in the most friendly fashion, though with evident uneasiness and hesitancy on the part of Mr. Pinchover, who had suddenly lost much of his consequential and flamboyant air, they went in the direction of the tender with the intention of disembarking. When it was realized that they were about to leave the vessel, the crew, actuated by a common spirit, sprang to every available place, along the ship's rails, and in the rigging, where a view could be had of the departing millionaire, and when he was going over the side the air rang with hearty and repeated cheers for Pitsligo Tysford. The tender not understanding the reason for the ovation, but assuming that it had been duly commanded, let go her discordant whistle, and other tugs and steam craft in the river, impelled by the impulse which leads so many to delight in adding to a hullaballoo, screamed and shrieked to their hearts' content. This deafening racket kept on in spite of mute protestations from the astonished and bewildered individual in whose honour it had originated, and only died away when the tiny steamer disappeared from sight, as it made for a convenient landing higher up the river, where

Digitized by Google

a carriage was waiting for Jabez Pinchover and his Australian guest.

When the excitement had somewhat subsided, and while the *Sovereign Queen* was steaming towards her dock, Thalia Thesperius, who had no idea what the shouting, waving and whistling meant, caught hold of the boatswain and inquired:

"Look here, my good man, have you all gone crazy? Tell me, what's it all about?"

"Well, madam, it is a kind o' farewell, *aurivore*, as Miss Charmartan would say, to our pertic'lar friend, Mr. Tysford."

"Mr. Tysford! why, I didn't see him, though I've been watching patiently for him."

"Why, mum, where were your blessed eyes? That was him who went over the side with Mr. Pinchover, one of the heads of our Steamship Company."

"That! Why, that was the old man that I promised to send a ticket to the play."

"You promised that, did you?" chuckled the sailor; "that was considerate, seeing as how he could buy out all the theatres in London, and hardly miss the cash."

"If that's so," retorted Thalia, ready to weep from downright vexation, "then I've been imposed on."

Orlop with a sailor's scrape sheered off and began searching the dock with his eyes for some one. He was soon rewarded by the sight of a woman's form, and bounding down the gangplank, he caught her in his strong arms, and gave her an affectionate hug that almost took away her breath.

"'Ere I am, Zinnia, all well an' hearty, and—but missus, what on earth's the matter? You're pale, sick. What's wrong? How's our girl?"

"O Orlop! that I should have to tell you."

"Is Fiona dead?"

"Worse, Orlop, worse; Fiona has been making crooked paths for her feet, and she has gone away."

His eyes began to roll wildly, his hands clutched convulsively, and in a thick voice he exclaimed: "May

Digitized by Google

God Almighty forgive her." Then grasping another aspect of the calamity and shame, his old habit reasserted itself, and he began to pour forth an awful stream of imprecations against the author of her waywardness. But Zinnia drew his head down on her bosom and whispered:

"Hush, Orlop, hush, you are seen and overheard. Have some respect for your wife, and remember it is written: 'Vengeance is Mine: I will repay, saith the Lord.'"

Digitized by Google

VI

THE CROOKED PATHS FIONA MADE

FIONA YOUTSAY was just entering on womanhood when she abandoned the home of her parents. For several weeks prior to this step her manner had been undergoing a change, and her natural frank and cheery ways had given place to an increasingly moody and anxious air. Her mother in vain sought her confidence, but when she gently chided her for concealing some secret from the one who best could guide her, Fiona, with a start and a languid smile, would answer that she was not hiding anything and that her depression was unaccountable to herself.

During the earlier stages of her depression this was strictly true, and it was still comparatively true at the time of her disappearance. She was only conscious of an awakening within her that made her grave and reflective, and of a strange passion that had come to birth in her soul, which she had not dared to name, and of a singular joy, which she felt in spite of herself, when one who was in every essential a stranger to her touched her hand or breathed a few commonplace sentences in her ear. With herself she was perplexed, and her self-confusion was not unmixed with a sense of agreeable alarm. She could not comprehend a metamorphosis which saddened her, and which filled her with vague thoughts and with dreamy and delicious sensations prophetic of coming happiness. She had no clear perception that the sweetest natal hour in the experience of humanity had come to her, and that love was about to reward her inexplicable travail-pangs.

It is only surprising that the transition through which the maiden was passing had not come sooner. Fiona,

Digitized by Google

however, had been slow in maturing, and was still a novice. Men had always admired her as she moved along the streets, but she had never asked what it was that drew their eyes to herself. She was as unsuspecting as she was beautiful, and her beauty was of so rare a type—a mixture of the best that Spain and Italy in combination with England and Scotland can do for a woman—and there was so much of the charming abandon of the south with the prudish reserve of the north in her every movement, that it was next to impossible for her to appear anywhere without exciting admiration. Yet there was never anything but respectful homage in the looks that were fixed on her.

The awakening of Fiona began in the humdrum office where she was employed as a typist. Orlop Youtsay was poor, and as the bit of money brought to him by his wife was tied up in a modest dwelling not far from Hackney Common, the girl was compelled to earn her own livelihood. Consequently, she had been pretty thoroughly educated, and she had decided that the best and most profitable use of her attainments could be made in the field of stenography and typing. The details of her vocation were speedily mastered, and it did not take her long to obtain a situation. In answer to an advertisement she found a position in the establishment presided over by the Misses Twyzer on Bishopsgate Street, near to Crosby Hall; or, to be more accurate, managed exclusively by Miss Jerusha Twyzer, for her sister, Clarinda, had dissolved her active connection with the firm, and had formed a matrimonial alliance, offensive and defensive, with Jonah Chowler, a most respectable and bald-headed clerk in the service of "The Sovereign Australian Steamship Company, Limited."

For business reasons the dual name at the head of the firm had been retained, and for family reasons the very reputable Chowler had maintained a lively interest in its welfare and prosperity. Customers multiplied in a little while after the induction of Fiona, and the profits increased amazingly. Merchants, ripe in years and ex-

Digitized by Google

perience, sought the Twyzers' office to dictate their letters; and students, playwrights and authors devoutly visited the same shrine, that rambling theses and alleged plays, stories or essays might be corrected and rendered legible. Others came to make inquiries, and lingered to feast their eyes on the young woman, who never lifted her head from her task, but went on, click, click, click, as though life had nothing in it of greater interest to her than the ceaseless clicking of the monotonous machine.

Miss Jerusha complacently congratulated herself that at last her preeminent merits were being recognized and rewarded. She raised the rate for "services rendered" and still the patronage increased. It never occurred to her that beauty had more to do with this extraordinary success than utility; and possibly she would have continued to take all the credit to herself had not an event occurred which upset her theories and impaired to the point of bankruptcy her receipts.

On a particular day, and one to be afterwards forever memorable in the annals of an ancient house, a distinguished and courtly gentleman left the inner office of Jabez Pinchover, being ceremoniously bowed out and accompanied by Mitchie Carfrae. As he was passing Chowler's desk on his way to the outer door, he nodded condescendingly to that worthy, and then, as if recollecting something, stopped and inquired whether he knew any reliable and expert stenographers in the neighbourhood.

"Certainly, my lord; there is the Twyzer firm under the very shadow of Crosby Hall," answered the respectable Chowler; "you will find the operators fast, accurate and obliging. Shall I run over and introduce your grace?"

"Not at all, thank you. I can find the way easily enough. Good-day." And humming an air from Faust, his lordship went unconcernedly towards his trap, and was speedily whirled to the entrance leading to the Twyzer sanctum. When he ascended the steps he had no idea who the presiding genius was, or whether

Digitized by Google

the business was conducted by men or women. He, however, saw as he crossed the threshold that the office was an "Adamless Eden," and he was not quite sure that he had not better beat a retreat. But this half-formed purpose died away when the vision of Fiona's beauty burst upon him, as she gracefully rose to receive him.

Never had he seen before such an embodiment of perfect female loveliness. The glory of her Titian-coloured hair, the soft luminousness of her wondrous eyes, the delicate interblending of rose and lily in her complexion, the purity of her broad and intellectual forehead, the sculptured regularity of her features, the inviting fullness of her snowy neck, and the symmetrical proportions of her form—all rendered more distinct and effective by the dark hue of her closely fitting walking dress, scarcely relieved by the bunch of violets in her bosom—took him by surprise and bewitched him.

He changed his mind. His work was imperative and must be attended to at once. Would she be so kind as to assist him in his correspondence?

A strident voice emanating from an attenuated and angular female arrayed in a silk robe, and adorned with corkscrew ringlets, intimated shrilly that if Miss Youtsay could not wait upon him immediately she would. A sudden terror seized his lordship and he began some incoherent reply, when Fiona, not understanding the real cause of his confusion, but perceiving his embarrassment, generously came to his relief.

"Oh, I can take his letters as well as not, Miss Twyzer, and it's not necessary for you to lay aside the manuscript you are copying. This way, sir, if you please."

His lordship sat down near the girl and remote from the Twyzer machine, which took up again its regular click, click, click, interspersed only by the aggravating readjustments of the roller and carriage.

"Do you prefer," she asked, "to have your letters stenographed or typed as you dictate them?"

"It will take considerable more time to have them

Digitized by Google

typed as I go on than it would to have them taken down in short hand and afterwards copied, will it not?"

"Certainly," Fiona responded, "only by the latter method more of my time is consumed and less of yours, and by the former we both together occupy just the same time."

"Then I will choose the 'together' plan. On the whole that will be best, and then I can sign the letters at once and take them with me for mailing."

The preliminaries were settled and he proceeded with his dictation, and several business communications of varying importance were typed. A few others, which struck Fiona as being rather incoherent and aimless, followed. She also could not help noticing that her new patron was the slowest person she had ever met.

He paused hesitatingly at almost every word, hemmed and hawed, drawled and stuttered, cleared his throat and selected his phrases as deliberately as he might have chosen diamonds, and yet when he had completed his task the composition read very much like a schoolboy's effort.

Fiona attempted with the utmost tact to induce him to quicken his pace. Her endeavours were useless. He would not go on, but like a balky horse, the more he was urged to haste, the more he lost by shying what he gained by speed. At last, however, very much to her relief, her new patron finished. He rose from his chair as if the exertion might prove fatal to him. Fiona handed him a memorandum of indebtedness, and as he approached Miss Twyzer, the mistress of the exchequer, the humour of the situation seemed to dawn on him, for he remarked:

"I have been incorrigibly slow, but I never could hurry. Well, charge me for the time that has been spent and not for the actual work done." Miss Twyzer thereupon, having few scruples on the subject of money, blandly added an additional sovereign to the bill. His lordship paid without a murmur, signed and folded his letters, put them in the addressed envelopes, and without

Digitized by Google

having disclosed his identity, bowed himself out of the office.

"Very much of a gentleman," commented Miss Twyzer, and looking into the street through the window, she added, "and what a handsome turnout he has. There's a groom waiting on him. I wonder who he can be. Did you, Fiona, discover his name?"

"No, Miss Twyzer, I did not."

"What was he writing about?"

"I really don't know. I was not attentive to his particular business, and I suppose that typists are in honour bound never to remember or report what they are paid to transcribe."

"Folderol! we must not be over nice in such affairs. You ought to remember, some items of information thus obtained, if wisely used, as in the case of stocks, might lead to fortune."

Fiona did not further answer or contend. She was certain that she would not transgress against her own conscience, and she was equally sure she was not competent to deal with the ethical tergiversation of her employer. Her place at the machine was resumed, and the irritating click, click, began again. As she plied her deft fingers the feeling crept over her that she had lost something. So strong was this impression that she rose and searched for her pocketbook. It had not flown away. There it was with her hat and gloves. It was evidently not that she had missed. But there was something gone from her, she knew not what. Once more the little machine rattled on, and in spite of herself she grew melancholy.

In the morning Fiona was still downcast and fidgety, and as the week rolled on she did not perceptibly improve. On its close his lordship returned to the office, and after that came regularly, always bringing with him a memorandum of letters to be prepared, most of which according to Fiona's business judgment, might just as well have been left unanswered. She did not say as much as this to him. It was not for her to discourage so profitable a

Digitized by Google

patron and so elegant a gentleman. Then when he was with her and sitting near her his mere presence had a soothing and cheering effect on her.

The frequent association with each other, and their participation in a common work, gradually removed the first stiffness and the sense of strangeness. His lordship also unbent, often indulged in a few pleasant words to the typist, and flattered the spinster, Miss Twyzer, in the most lavish manner, to her face.

Fiona wondered why he should be so eloquent when talking with her employer, and be so tongue-tied and faltering when he tried to speak with her. These, and other questions growing out of her varying moods, she carried every noon time to a retired spot, which she had sought ever since her heart had come under the spell of an indefinable emotion.

Every one knows Tidman's Coffee and Chop House, that is every one who knows Bishopsgate Street, and he who is ignorant of Bishopsgate Street is in a very benighted condition, indeed. Tidman's is in close proximity to Crosby Place, and can readily be identified by its fifteenth century architecture. Near by there is an obscure timber-corbelled archway that leads into Great St. Helen's, where the quiet of a meagre, desolate graveyard reigns, and where a venerable church, if not the oldest in London, opens its hospitable doors to the weary and heavy-laden. It is a picturesque and romantic structure, revealing some of its vicissitudes in its heavy and dark-coloured stained glass windows, and in the varied treatment it has received from the hands of many restorers and remodellers. What it was in the thirteenth century can hardly be determined by what it is in the twentieth. It has been called the "Westminster of the city," and the number of the tombs above, and the number of the dead sleeping beneath, its sunken floor, give it somewhat the character of an ecclesiastical mausoleum.

The interior of the building is distinguished by two aisles, divided by high arches, leading from the west door

Digitized by Google

to the chancel, on the right of which stands the organ, by whose side runs a small path opening into a chantry, the chantry in its turn leading into the Lady Chapel and the Chapel of the Holy Ghost. This retreat, while easily accessible, is not at first discernible, and has to be sought by the visitor. It is a veritable Holy of Holies, where one can pray and meditate unseen and undisturbed. At the opposite corner of the sacred edifice, and at the extreme easterly end of what is called the Nun's Choir, the Gresham Memorial, an old-fashioned, smooth-topped stone table of a tomb, commemorates the civic virtues of that ancient city magnate. Not far from this monument in the northern wall a small arched entrance indicates how the members of the conventual order obtained admission to the church; and in close proximity to it there are two aumbries, and a hagioscope or squint, consisting of six vertical oblique openings, which was designed to be of special service to the Black Nuns, who for generations worshipped here.

When Fiona's joyousness declined and the real life of introspection had commenced, the noise and hurry of Tidman's became distasteful and unendurable to her, and after a hasty lunch she found her way into the sacred quiet of St. Helen's. There she could wander about as she pleased, and brood and reflect, and torture her poor mind with all kinds of self-impaling and self-flagellating queries and misgivings. Of late, also, the necessity for such solitude and meditation had been intensified by several significant circumstances.

His lordship had become increasingly considerate, courteous and confiding, although he still veiled his identity; and to her astonishment Fiona, as she followed him one day with her eyes when he entered the street, saw him tear up the letters he had just dictated and throw them into the nearest rubbish receptacle. In addition, to the distress of her mother and to her own confusion, he had been sending every morning fresh violets.

No card accompanied the flowers, but she knew instinctively that he was the donor. What did it all mean?

Digitized by Google

Why should he send flowers to her? Why, also, did he destroy the letters he had so carefully indited? And why should he approach her with so much deference, and with so much of softness and music in his speech?

These questions she revolved over and over again. They harassed and tormented her. There were other developments, also, which made her uneasy, and called for immediate examination and explanation. Why was she always so much more contented herself when he was near her than when he was absent? Why did she find herself repeating the kindly expressions that had fallen from his lips? Why did she blush when she touched the violets he had sent, why did she cherish them, and what was it that led her to conceal a few of them under the cover of her dress, close to her bosom? What was she to think? How was she to act? This state of things could not continue indefinitely. Her mind was so agitated that she was not equal to her duties, and yet what could she do to bring matters to a satisfactory issue?

It was impossible for her to take the initiative. She did not even know the name of the man who had disturbed her peace, and delicacy had restrained her from seeking to discover what he for some reason did not voluntarily disclose. How then could she approach him and open a subject which was so obscure to herself, and which her maidenly modesty told her might in some manner involve her in unpleasant complications? Yet in some way, though she could not imagine in what way, she must be relieved from the tension from which she was suffering. She must let him know that his flowers were unwelcome, and that she must no longer be tortured by his presence and civilities.

At one noon hour, as she stood near the "Nun's Grate," leaning for support on Gresham's tomb, and yielding to tears, the massive form of a clergyman suddenly towered beside her, and a deep musical voice addressed her:

"Daughter, you are in sorrow. Excuse me, but is

Digitized by Google

your grief such that a priest of God may venture to offer consolation? If you were praying, forgive me for intruding, but let me assure you that the All-Father will hear."

"No, reverend sir, I ought to be ashamed to confess it, but I wasn't praying. I'm a wage-earning girl, and I come in here each day to escape the noise of the city for a moment, and sometimes when I think of my perplexities and burdens, I foolishly give way to tears."

"The Lord bless you, daughter, and help you, and cause His face to shine upon you, and give you peace."

Fiona instinctively bowed her head as she would have done in the presence of an angel, and then looking up she asked with diffidence: "May I be so bold, reverend sir, as to inquire whether you are the rector of this parish, and whether my coming here each day is objectionable to you, or to the verger?"

"No, daughter, I am not the priest of this church. But you cannot be otherwise than welcome within these sacred walls, for are we not told that the swallows find a refuge in God's altars, and are not you, my child, nearer to the heart of Christ than many sparrows or swallows? I am only a lowly priest labouring among the poor in the East End of London, and I am making a study of this venerable edifice which is itself a monument of early Christianity in this land."

The man who thus spoke to her was of gigantic build, nearly seven feet in height, whose form at once suggested the Farnesian Hercules and the Apollo Belvidere, and whose head might have served as a model for an ideal Plato. There was in the face, however, an expression which no artist would ever dream of associating with any philosopher of the classic age. It shone with the effulgence of unmistakable purity. The eyes were imbued with its soft light, and the mouth and chin were touched and beautified by its radiance. There was no trace on the broad and lofty brow of an unholy thought and no indication in the shape of the ear of a lurking satyr in his soul. He was such a man as children love and

Digitized by Google

maidens trust, because of a guilelessness and noble simplicity which make themselves felt, and before which timidity disappears and innocence is assured. Fiona was drawn to him as towards a canonized saint. She would not have been surprised to see a halo about his head. If she had dared she would have touched the hem of his garment, and had it not seemed absurd she would have fallen at his feet and craved another blessing. She was too much of a modern girl to do any such thing, and so she only said:

"I am grateful, reverend sir, for your kind words. I suppose," she added naively, "I ought to call you father, as you are pleased to call me daughter, but you are not old enough to be my father."

She was right in her surmise, for although silvery streaks mingled with his hair, he was only thirty-five years old. Smiling on her with such a smile as the Christ may have bestowed on the little children when they thronged His way, he replied:

"True, daughter, but in the church relationships are determined not by the flesh, but by the spirit, even as the Master Himself regarded those who did His will as members of His family in preference to those who were allied to Him by blood. Thus the priest, though a celibate, and though he may not have reached middle age, representing the Divine Father, at least in his offices of oversight and instruction, may fittingly be named father. Moreover, the gracious title reminds the people that they are not abandoned by God, but that there are those anointed to sympathize with them and counsel them in every hour of darkness."

He saluted Fiona with an inclination of his magnificent head, and, with the uplifting of his hand in benediction, realizing that he had already trespassed too long on the attention of the young woman, he resumed his examination of the church, and in a few minutes disappeared in the obscurity of the chantry. Fiona thought of him often that afternoon during her work. He was so manly and so beautiful with the splendour of untarnished

Digitized by Google

spiritual beauty, the strange conceit occurred to her that he might be one of the angels,—Michael, Gabriel, or Oriphiel,—going about disguised as a clergyman, and she tried to picture him arrayed in celestial habiliments, with flaming sword driving the fallen spirits from heaven, or with golden trumpet awaking the dead for judgment.

The next day when she returned to the church he was already there, tablets in hand, making notes as he studied the building; but he did not speak to her, merely bowed. On the day following he was still there, but reticent and dignified. The day succeeding he was gone, at least Fiona did not see him, and to her the place was less sacred because he was absent.

Meanwhile, the attention of the gentleman, addressed in Jabez Pinchover's office as "my lord," and "your grace," to the Twyzers' typing establishment, had not passed unnoticed by those reputable members of the mercantile world, Chowler and Carfrae. They had observed the frequency and regularity of his lordship's visits to Twyzers', and were satisfied that something more romantic than business was back of this extraordinary devotion.

They were strengthened in their suspicion when his lordship took occasion to hint that it would be more than agreeable to him, if his name and rank were not divulged to those whom he was benefiting by his patronage. They hastened to intimate with bows that his incognito was entirely safe with them, and that they very well understood the dislike which noblemen entertained for publicity when they condescended to take an interest in commerce. Moreover, they were honoured, highly honoured by his confidence. He nodded in a half-supercilious manner, and left them droning almost inaudibly a certain passage from the opera of "Don Giovanni." That same afternoon, Mitchie Carfrae decided to have some typing done on his own account, and as soon as he saw Fiona he thought he understood the whole situation.

"I don't blame your grace," he said to himself, as he

Digitized by Google

returned to his office. "If I had the money —— But, bah! I'm poor, and then, I have not your lordly ways. One might be well content to endure poverty were it shared by such a woman as that! And would it not be better for her to be the wife of a poor man than to be the—favourite of a rich peer?

"Chowler, I've just been over to Twyzers'. Can you tell me who the assistant is? Have you ever seen her? She's a ravishing beauty."

The bald pate of the reputable clerk wrinkled and flushed red as its owner listened to this unparalleled interest on the part of Carfrae.

"I know very well who she is," answered Chowler. "Her name is Youtsay, and her father is a boatswain sailing on the *Sovereign Queen* of our line, and she lives with her mother near Hackney Common. She's a good, respectable girl; but I've never seen her. As a married man I've no business with 'ravishing beauties,' and it might be just as well if single men kept away from them. I am told they are worse and more dangerous than a bowl of punch. And, Carfrae, upon my word, I never saw you look as inebriated as you do at this moment. Have you been drinking deep?"

"Oh, nonsense! I'm not one to be infatuated easily. I was only surprised at the beauty of the young woman, and curious to know something about one, who, unless indications fail, is destined, I'm thinking ——" He stopped short and did not complete the sentence.

"What were you thinking, Carfrae?" inquired Chowler,

"Oh, nothing! Yes, I was thinking it is far to Gower Street, and it is late. I must get home."

The day after this conversation occurred, his lordship came as usual to Twyzers'. Fiona had been expecting him, and as her position had become increasingly painful, she had decided that an understanding must now be reached. She had matured a plan and waited only for an opportunity to put it in execution. His lordship, after paying his respects to the starched and ringleted head of

Digitized by Google

the firm, took a chair near Fiona, convenient for dictation, and where he could easily see the printed lines as they successively appeared above the roller. He began by addressing in his usual, slow and hesitating way: "Kingman and Nott, Chancery Lane, Cheapside." His amanuensis rattled away, and when she paused he saw at a glance that she had typed something very different from what he had dictated. This is what appeared on the paper: "You are a gentleman. Can I trust you? Remember Miss Twyzer is in the room."

His lordship without betraying his astonishment, continued as though he had not seen: "Gentlemen: In all of our affairs you know you can implicitly trust in my honour. Above all things I desire to serve you."

It took him a long while to form this sentence, and when the sheet was moved above the roller, he read: "Thank you; you embarrass me by sending flowers. Please do so no more."

Still with imperturbable countenance, he went on: "May I ask the favour of an immediate interview when your wishes can be considered?" In response there was inscribed the words: "I cannot discuss with you in this situation and reluctantly consent."

His lordship calmly pursued his theme: "Let the interview be at your convenience and where you please." Click, click, click went the instrument with this result: "To-morrow, 12:30, St. Helen's Church, by Gresham's tomb."

"I shall hold myself bound," he added, "to comply with your plans, and am, with sincere esteem, your obedient servant." Click, click, click metallically replied the heartless mechanism: "Believe me, I regret exceedingly that any such meeting as this is necessary."

That was all. The work on correspondence was not protracted. A few other letters were turned off, and then his lordship settled his bill, and with several courtly compliments to Miss Jerusha Twyzer, took his leave.

Digitized by Google

VII

FIONA SEEKS REFUGE IN THE WILDERNESS

THE next morning darkened London with one of its foggiest November days, and when high noon was proclaimed by many a sonorous bell, the sun had not unveiled its face. So dense, dirty and yellow were the vapoury clouds rolling on the ground through the city, instead of pursuing their legitimate way in the heavens, that street passengers ran into one another and parted with fierce invective, and conveyances collided and irate drivers cursed vociferously.

The mists, surcharged with mire and clay, invaded lanes and courts, penetrated into offices and chambers, hung drearily over St. Helen's secluded churchyard, and were not entirely excluded from the old church itself. They managed to creep in under the great doors, or down the chimneys, or through the side entrances, and while they did not plunge the building in anything like the blackness of night, they were sufficiently thick to render the "dim, religious light" far too dim for religious uses.

Nevertheless, soon after twelve o'clock the clergyman, who for some time had been piously studying the sacred structure, exchanged greetings with Nicholas, the verger, who was surprised to see him in such dismal weather. Such tireless ardour in the search for ecclesiastical lore, and such devotion to antiquities he had never witnessed before, and he could not but feel that the enthusiast was bordering on fanaticism. Still, it was not for him to criticize his superiors, and it was a mad age, anyway; yet the venerable house was altogether too chilly for one as rheumatic as himself to linger in attendance on a foolhardy priest. Nicholas made for the choir vestry, a

Digitized by Google

cosey retreat, but as he was about to cross the threshold he was accosted by another visitor.

"If you are the verger will you oblige me by pointing out the tomb of Sir Thomas Gresham?"

Nicholas wondered whether this could be another hare-brained antiquarian, and for the life of him could not make out what had evoked this unusual interest in the ancient church. As he scrutinized the stranger, however, as far as the gloom would permit, he saw that there was no trace of ecclesiasticism in his appearance. Rather was he of the world, worldly and aristocratic. He was carefully and even fastidiously attired. His erect bearing, shoulders well thrown back and feet firmly planted on the pavement, and his clustering red hair and red mustache, combined with a mixture of languidness and authoritativeness in his manner, indicated the military gentleman, and probably a Scotchman at that.

All this, astute Nicholas was not slow to note; also the fact that the visitor was yet on the sunny side of forty, perhaps not much past thirty-three or four years of age, and therefore, not old enough, being a layman and apparently of the soldier kind, to be fascinated by musty and moldy memorials of distant times. What then could he be seeking on so foggy a day in St. Helen's? Concealing his curiosity he replied to the query that had been addressed to him:

"Yes, sir, I'm the verger, and over yonder is the famous Gresham tomb. It can't be clearly seen because of the mist, but by your leave, I'll take you over to it, and give you an account of its origin, and any other information you desire."

"Thank you, but that is not necessary, and I'll not impose on your good nature."

The gentleman placed in the verger's hand a coin, and moved through the hazy obscurity in the direction indicated. When Nicholas examined the gift and found that it was a golden half-sovereign and not a sixpence, his first impulse was to follow and thank the donor; but his second was to pocket it, and seek a nook where

Digitized by Google

he could watch. Evidently the generous unknown desired to be alone, and as he had paid handsomely for privacy it ought to be his to enjoy undisturbed. Nevertheless, as the custodian of the sacred building, it would not be amiss to keep his eye on this exceptionally liberal individual. The verger, having so concluded, made a show of going out, and then stealthily crept back through the shadows and secreted himself where he could conveniently observe without being observed. The place was well chosen.

In the north wall of the building, about midway in the Nun's Choir, there is a small arched doorway. As one passes within, a narrow flight of steps, growing narrower until abruptly terminated by the stone work partition, is discovered. Centuries ago these stairs doubtless connected with the adjacent Priory; but when that structure disappeared the communication was cut off, and only this deceitful stairway—a convenient hiding-place—remained. Thither Master Nicholas betook himself with all the silence possible, bent on his congenial undertaking.

In the meanwhile the clergyman had entered Lady Chapel by way of the chantry, his favourite retreat, at the southeast end of the church, and was pacing to and fro communing with himself. Had his thoughts been expressed in speech they would have composed some such soliloquy as this:

"Blair Hamley, I am ashamed of you, I'm almost tempted to cut your acquaintance. Here you are, a priest of the living God, vowed to celibacy and to a mission of self-abnegation and toil for the sake of the East End of London poor, here you are, confessor to a convent of nuns, drawn day after day to this spot by the fascination of a woman's face. What on earth, and in heaven's name has come over you? Are you sane? You are no longer a youth and cannot plead a youth's intemperate warmth and passion. Thank God, you are not as bad as that; and thank God, all that riot of blood and nerves you have been delivered from. But

Digitized by Google

here, your whole theory of priestly life and duty has suddenly been put in jeopardy by a young woman, at least ten years your junior, of whom you have no knowledge, but whose presence has created in your soul the vision of a quiet home with wife and little ones, and quickened anew the craving for human love, a craving you had boasted was dead within you beyond the possibility of resuscitation. And this, Blair Hamley, after your Oxford associations, and after your fellowship with the heroic, self-sacrificing spirits of your own age, fired by the exalted example of the sainted Newman, and the magnificent enthusiasm of the lamented Hurrell Froude! Well, I don't know what to make of you! Where has your reading, your meditation, and your carefully thought out plans for the restoration of the Catholic Church flown to, and is it possible that your matured convictions are to be shaken by this casual meeting with a girl seeking rest and the inspiration of holy memories in the sanctuary of the Almighty? What can it mean? Is this a Divine intimation that my purposes and aims are contrary to His will—or am I being tempted of the devil?"

Here he devoutly crossed himself. "Well, this infatuation must end here and now. Just one more look at her glorious face, one more brief dream of a home, and then, Blair Hamley, go forth as the soldier of Christ to your lonely warfare, to self-immolation, and to the deliverance of England and the world from the social and moral blight that has settled on them!"

The clergyman, with head slightly bowed, and still reflecting, emerged from the retirement of Lady Chapel, and went slowly towards the Nun's Choir. He walked through the chancel to the sacrarium at the extreme easterly end of the building, and paused for a moment or two before the splendid monument that immortalizes the name and services of great Elizabeth's ambassador to Spain, Sir William Pickering. As he paused, he perceived through the gloom, not far from him and beyond the railing, close to Gresham's tomb, the figure of a man;

Digitized by Google

and as he himself loomed large in the mist, he excited the attention of the stranger he had noticed.

"Who can that be?" wondered the gentleman, as he strove to take the dimensions of the clerical giant. "If anything, he's taller and more massive than my old classmate at Oxford, and if his strength is equal to his size, even that famous athlete would stand only a slim chance in a contest with him."

Oblivious of the momentary interest his appearance had aroused, Blair Hamley continued his walk, retracing his way to the Nun's Choir, until he stood opposite to the hiding-place of Nicholas, and there he halted; for as the city bells pealed the half hour Fiona Youtsay entered the building and drew near to where he was standing. She evidently had not expected to see him, for she gave an involuntary start as she came upon him in the dingy church. Her manner betrayed trepidation and confusion, and with a hasty word of respectful greeting she made as if she would hurry by. His voice arrested her, and his large eyes, deeply mystical with the far away look of one who continually sees the celestial hosts and the yet unborn events of coming time, shone more brilliantly than ever in the murky atmosphere and held her spellbound.

"Young lady, you still find this sanctuary a blessed place of repose and refreshment in the midst of your toil?"

"Yes, reverend father." He winced when he heard his favourite title. "And you also seem to be much attached to this quaint, though somewhat gloomy house of God." This was said with the utmost simplicity and ingenuousness, and yet Blair Hamley flushed and was uneasy. He replied:

"True, but my pleasant task is near completion. In half an hour it will be over, and probably I shall never again visit this sacred spot,—a spot rendered doubly sacred to me by what I have learned from the lives of those who lie buried here, and by a vision that has come to me of earthly felicity which can never be mine to

Digitized by Google

possess. This house, quiet and secluded, in the midst of the crowded, turbulent city, has been to me like the serene pulsing of a human heart in the bosom of a body racked with pain and exposed to tempests. May its peace infold you and never forsake you, young lady!"

"Why do you not call me 'daughter,' as you did at first?"

"Do you not remember that you chided me for doing so on account of my comparative youth?"

"No, reverend sir, I did not intend to chide, and you were kind enough to explain, and your explanation was beautiful. I shall always think of you as 'father,'" continued Fiona, not observing a shadow of disappointment on Hamley's face, "and if you will only tell me where you preach I will sometimes come and hear you." As she spoke she seemed to recollect herself, and gazed furtively about her as if seeking some one. The clergyman, apparently looking beyond her, failed to notice her restless motions, and replied:

"Thank you. I have for over a year devoted my ministry to the wilderness, to the neglected thousands of Bethnal Green and Spitalfields. In the wilderness, if ever you think I can serve you, you will not find it difficult to discover Father Blair Hamley."

Had the speaker been less engrossed with his theme he could hardly have failed to see that Fiona had grown impatient and was anxious for the interview to end. Approaching footsteps, however, brought him to himself, and her barely restrained agitation told the story of an appointment which he unwittingly had interrupted.

"Daughter," he remarked gravely and somewhat coldly, "pardon me. I fear I have been an unwelcome intruder. I judge I have kept you from keeping an engagement."

"Yes, Father Hamley, I did promise to meet an acquaintance here. I trust you do not think there is anything wrong in that?"

"Daughter, from the first moment my eyes rested on you I never associated wrong with thought or act of

Digitized by Google

yours. Neither do I now." He bowed his head with the solemn inclination of one passing a picture of the Virgin, and lifting up his hand in blessing, whispered, "*Pax vobiscum;*" then, without turning once to see if possible who was about to take his place, he left the building and entered the dismal and mist-drenched graveyard beyond.

"At last you are alone," exclaimed Miss Twyzer's most profitable customer, as he approached from the direction of Gresham's tomb and came within earshot of the prying verger. "At first I didn't see you on account of this detestable fog; then, you were further hidden by a giant, and I couldn't discover what had transfixed the monster. I ventured to take a step or two nearer, and then caught the vague outline of your own figure, like the outline of a phantom. I didn't come close enough, believe me, to overhear your conversation. But as he stayed long, and as I feared you had forgotten your other appointment, I concluded that I ought at least to remind you I was here."

"I hadn't forgotten that I had promised to meet you," she replied.

"And so you planned to grant interviews at practically the same hour to two gentlemen?"

There was a touch of irony in his manner of speaking which sealed the lips of Fiona and prevented the explanation, which otherwise she would have given gladly. It was none of his affair. He was not her master. Therefore, she ignored his thinly veiled sensitiveness, and proceeded, without seeming in the least ruffled:

"I haven't sought this meeting, and only consented to your request that I might persuade you no longer to embarrass me by sending me flowers, which I cannot consent to receive."

"But if I decline?"

"You will not. I have thus far taken you for a gentleman, and a gentleman would never persecute a helpless girl even with kindnesses when they are not agreeable to her. But were you to persist I should feel constrained to leave the employment of Miss Twyzer."

Digitized by Google

"But," he answered quickly, "I suppose you have no objection to violets sent by your other friend?"

"Pardon me, sir, you presume too much," she retorted with warmth. "The gentleman who has just left me never sent me a flower at any time, and his thoughts are far away from such trifles. As for yourself, sir, I do not claim the honour of counting you among my friends. Friendship is a very sacred thing."

"And yet, Miss Youtsay, is it possible that you have been so blind as not to see that I have coveted something more from you than friendship? Can you not see that I am madly in——"

"Hush, I entreat you, sir!" Fiona replied. "Remember where you are. And if you mean by that 'something more' what I imagine you do, let me say, that 'something more' can never exist between those who are unacquainted with each other. You are a stranger to me, and I am a stranger to you. I do not even know your name."

"Then, you are one who believes that love is a prudent grace, and never commits itself until due precautions have been taken not to entangle itself with humble fortunes and obscure position."

"You misjudge me," Fiona rejoined, and her heart beat painfully and it was not easy to repress her tears. "You misjudge me. It seems to me that a man and woman may be drawn towards each other, and may take pleasure in each other's company, and may fancy this feeling to be love, when it is no such thing. Love is not passion, it is higher and nobler; it is the affiance of one soul with the greatness, goodness, gentleness, purity, sweetness and tenderness of another soul, and is born of the reciprocal recognition and interblending of these qualities."

"Then," he interjected, "you do not think there is any such thing as love at first sight?"

"Perhaps I ought not to talk with you on such questions. Alas! what can I know of this eternal mystery of love? Love may prophesy for all I know, may have its

Digitized by Google

ineffable visions, and these rising unbidden when two human beings meet may be regarded as love at first sight, when in truth they are only prophetic of what may be, and the inspiration to that further knowledge without which abiding love can never really be."

"I am to conclude then that you do not and cannot believe me when I solemnly swear that——"

"Again I beseech you to realize where you are, and permit me to end an interview which has taken on a character I did not anticipate, and which has already become distasteful to me. You have no right to say what was on your lips to say, as you cannot tell whether I am worthy of your love, and I on my part cannot tell whether you are worthy of mine—and love that ignores worthiness is itself unworthy. You will pardon me, having made my appeal to your chivalry, for which purpose alone I consented to this interview, if I now go."

Nor was she deterred by his remonstrances. When he tried to speak she raised her hand to silence him. He seized it and pressed it to his lips. She withdrew it promptly, and yet there was no expression of indignation on her face. Her eyes spoke for her what was in her soul to say, that she was not as she had been, that the premonitions of a love struggling to be born were troubling her, and that he himself was the centre of this inner and transforming commotion. Bestowing on her lover a parting look full of kindness and of tenderness, she went on her way, out into the fog, out into the wretched muddy streets crowded with weary human beings thinking of ledgers, of bills receivable and notes maturing, where romance and sentiment are never recognized as possible factors in the destiny of man. What has the Royal Exchange to do with sentiment? What does Mark Lane know of romantic love?

His lordship, after Fiona's departure, sauntered about the church, while the verger, startled and shocked by what he had heard—which it was possible for him to hear only in part—slipped from his covert and moved quietly towards the door. There his lordship found him when

Digitized by Google

he was prepared to leave the building, and recognizing him, tipped him with another half-sovereign, and disappeared. As he crossed the church-yard he was so lost in his own reflections that he did not notice he was observed. Concealed by the shadow of a monument, Blair Hamley stood statuelike, immovable. His lordship, as he passed, almost touched him, and came near enough for his own face and the colour of his hair to be fairly disclosed. A single glance was all the clergyman needed. He shrank back under cover of the monument, and exclaimed, though not above a whisper:—

"It's the Red Comyn! What could he have wanted with that girl? Could she know? To me she seemed the very embodiment of womanly purity, and is it possible —— No; I will believe nothing against her, and, God helping, I will rescue her from this snare and peril!"

While the Reverend Blair Hamley, debating with himself and uncertain how to move, as he was unacquainted with Fiona's name or residence, shouldered his way through the semi-darkness of the city, that young woman trod the hard pavements lightly, as one treading on air. She began to understand herself and the changing moods of the past few weeks. Love had entered her life. She was no longer alone and her own. A sense of possessing and being possessed, combined with a delicious dreaminess, not unmixed with apprehension, pervaded her soul. She wanted to dance, to sing, to clap her hands, to do something joyously extravagant—or to stop still and cry. Suppose he should be offended and never return to her. Or suppose, after all —— The alternative was too horrible for a moment's thought. He would not deceive her, or abandon her; he would prove his worthiness, and love would triumph.

At an earlier hour than usual, Fiona reached her modest home. The house was an end one in a row of plain, small, and soot-begrimed dwellings, not uncommon in the Hackney district. Flowers graced the windows, and the dainty white curtains, though made of cheap materials, betokened taste and refinement. Within cleanli-

Digitized by Google

ness and comfort prevailed. The furniture and carpets were neither new nor expensive, yet they were neither dilapidated nor worthless. They were such as a moderate income guided by unaffected simplicity, free from the taint of vulgarity, would provide. Several of the ornaments were suggestive of a sailor's calling :—pictures of ships variously named and differently rigged, a time worn engraving of Trafalgar, a miniature Chinese junk done in the most fragile of ivory, a Japanese cabinet curiously inlaid with native woods, two rusty cutlasses and an old knife or dirk adorned with a glittering yellow stone, and sheathed in a common leather scabbard such as seamen wear attached to their belts when on shipboard. These and a few other decorative articles, mainly doilies, tidies of tatting and drawn work, added to the cheerfulness of the rooms.

When Fiona let herself in by the side door, which led directly into the tiny dining-room, adjoining the humble parlour, she was halted by the sound of a strange female voice in excited conversation with her mother. She had no intention of listening, but she could not fail to hear, and having heard a few words she could not tear herself away from the spot.

"I tell you your daughter is in danger."

"But don't you know," responded Mrs. Youtsay urgently, "that you are calling in question my daughter's honour and purity?"

"Not at all," replied the loud talking woman. "No such thing. Be reasonable. I never saw her. I never met her, and I couldn't have guessed anything about her or who her mother was. It all came about in this way. I was talking to a friend of mine about my own misfortunes and about my wish to be respectable once more, when he ups an' says, 'Mrs. Quaco, your feelin's do you proud. But this is a wicked world,' says he, 'and many things are in the way of a woman's being respectable. There is now to my knowledge,' says he, 'a great man, a lord or prince, who is trying to get a beautiful girl in his clutches. Not much hope,' says he, 'for her respecta-

Digitized by Google

bility if she listens to him, and he sees her every day.'"

"Did he say every day?" exclaimed the anxious mother, "every day! and what is his name?"

"My friend wouldn't tell me that. Says he, 'it would be worth my prospects in life to inform on him.' Then it's none of our business. We must know our place with the likes of him or it 'ill be worse for us."

The mother groaned and Fiona came near to groaning herself.

"Now, don't take on that way. I've put you on your guard, and you'd be grateful if you only knew the trouble I've been at to find you out. When my friend wouldn't tell me the name of the man I wheedled him into telling me the name of the girl. Says I to him, says I, 'it would help me to be respectable again if you would only let me do what I can to get her out of this mess. If I could only see her mother, her mother might save her.'"

"Bless you, Mrs. Quaco, bless you!"

"'Well,' says he, 'her name is Youtsay, and her father is a sailor, and she lives somewhere near Hackney Common; and all her folks,' says he, 'are poor folks.' But when I set out on the search for you I never expected to discover what I have discovered. Why, it must be twenty years or more since I parted from you. How time flies!"

"Yes, Mrs. Quaco," answered Mrs. Youtsay drearily, "and that wretched past I have tried to bury and forget long ago."

"Well, you did have an awful experience with that man. How he did deceive you. And you, poor innocent, to think as how you was lawfully married when you wasn't no more married to him than I was; and then to make matters worse to have a daughter born out of wedlock—and she poor dear, to have no right to your present husband's name and to have none to her father's."

"Yes, yes, it is all horrible. Please don't make me

Digitized by Google

more unhappy by reviving the shame and sorrow of those days."

"I suppose your daughter knows all about it?"

"No, why should she? I have not darkened her life by relating what would have done her no good, and might have wrought much harm. My husband agreed with me, and has always been devoted to her."

"But did you never fancy what she would say if she ever found out? You know things have a queer way of coming up at last and blabbing, just as I've stumbled on you accidental like when you wasn't in my thoughts, and I'd never expected to meet you again."

"I cannot believe that she will ever discover my secret, and if she were to do so surely she would not blame me when I have been seeking her happiness. And you'd not pain us both by betraying me?"

"No," replied Mrs. Quaco, pitching her voice in an unnecessarily high key, "I'm for being respectable, and mean to keep clear of scandals if I can. Says I to myself, 'you must change and get into proper company,' and when my friend told me what he did, says I, 'if I does a good deed now it may kind of balance against some other things, and help me to think better of myself.' No, I'll never give you away."

"Thank you, thank you," exclaimed Mrs. Youtsay, "God will reward you!"

"I hope He may, I'm sure. I can sympathize with you, Mrs. Youtsay. I have a daughter too, and she don't know nothing about her father or mother, either. I've kept her away from me at school or at service, and she's thoroughly respectable. I've watched over her like a hawk, and thinking of her made me feel bad about myself. Says I to myself, says I, 'there's Tina, now, not very pretty but she's good, and what,' says I, 'would she say if she knew all about her birth and her mother? Well, says I, 'it won't do, and I'll turn over a new leaf, and get an honest job somewhere where I'm not known, and set up for respectable myself, and give Tina a chance.' So you see as I'm as deep in the mud as you're in the

Digitized by Google

mire, I'm not a going to put up any mean trick on you."

Before this recital, which implied bottomless depths of degradation, Mrs. Youtsay shrank and cowered. Yet she could not say anything. This vulgar, loud-talking woman was groping after a better life, why then discourage her by rebukes for the past, or why attempt to point out the immeasurable moral gulf that separated them.

"But, Mrs. Youtsay," continued the coarse, gross, garish visitor, "while you try to forget the past, never forget what sort of a man your daughter's father was. Daughters take after their fathers, and if she takes after him she'll give you no end of trouble. 'What's bred in the bone will out in the flesh,' and ——"

Fiona could endure no more. Humiliated, crushed, broken in spirit, she dragged herself away from the room where she had unwillingly overheard so much shameful talk, and softly ascended the back stairway to her own chamber. She threw herself on her bed in a paroxysm of grief. All the dreams of the morning had been rudely dispelled. She was now awake. Who was she, a maiden without a name, and compelled to blush for her parents, to fancy that any honest man, much less a gentleman, would care for her! Deception, deception, nothing but deception around her from her infancy, and the only way by which she could hope to retain the esteem of an honourable suitor would be by continuing the deception.

Her whole being revolted from the doom that was on her, and as she started up from her bed, her eyes flashed angry scorn and indignation. She wrung her hands in horror. Whom could she trust? On whom could she rely? Her mother had reared her in an atmosphere of falseness; and the man who had told her that very day of his love, had evidently been trifling with her. Otherwise, he certainly never would have mentioned her name to any one who could consort with such a creature as that whose presence in the house was a pollution. Could

Digitized by Google

this pretended lover of hers have found out the secret of her parentage, and was he, too, presuming on the taint of heredity? Whether he knew or not, he had insulted her. That was enough. She would tear his image from her heart, and she would have nothing more to do with him or with any one of those who had wedded her life to a lie. This home henceforth was no place for her. But where should she go? What could she do? Where hide herself from all who had ever known her? As she queried with herself her nervous hands were busy in packing a few necessary articles, and in concealing in her bosom a little money she had had safely locked in her writing desk.

"The clergyman said he was going into the wilderness, and where can I find a lonelier spot, or a more inaccessible refuge, than in the wilderness of London? No one will ever think of looking for me there, and there I may in time forget and soon shall be forgotten."

Stealthily she descended the back stairs, and glided unnoticed out of the house. The two women were yet talking as Fiona crossed the threshold and passed into the street. It was evening, and the fog of the day was deepening into the blackness of a thick November night. But the fugitive had no feeling of fear. She once had heard of a hotel in Shoreditch called the "Wessex," where a girl could safely lodge, and thither she directed her weary feet along the Hackney Road. As she stepped into the tiny rear hall leading to the dining-room on her way out of the house, her eye caught the glitter of the stone which flashed in the haft of the dirk that had been hung there for ornament, and in a moment she had removed it and hidden it beneath her outer garments.

Thus armed Fiona pushed forward to her halting place for the night, from whence with the coming of the morning she would plunge into the wilderness—a wilderness as perilous and poisonous, as horrible and hopeless, and almost as trackless and treacherous as the darkest depths of darkest Africa.

Digitized by Google

VIII

ON THE ROAD TO OAK HILL HALL

JABEZ PINCHOVER did not immediately recover from the collapse he had experienced on first meeting with his distinguished guest. The shock was so unexpected that it had taken all the starch and feather out of his manner. His expanded chest had contracted, his self-complacent side-whiskers had drooped, and the very flower in his button-hole had wilted. That he, the pink and paragon of mercantile dignity, the impeccable and consummate embodiment of commercial suavity and gammon, should be seen in company with this tattered Diogenes, this man who insisted on playing the part of neglected Lazarus to his own Dives, was almost too much for his inflated soul to endure.

But as the tender steamed up the river to London Bridge he gradually recovered his self-possession, and by the time he had ensconced his companion in the carriage, and had pushed himself forward on the seat, as was his wont, so as to hide his neighbour, he had become as chesty and as talkative as ever. Philosophy, or something else, had come to his assistance.

It had occurred to him that genius was frequently eccentric, and that brilliant painters and exceptional poets had been tolerated and even welcomed by society when they had only contempt for its etiquette and conventionalisms. If such flighty beings as these were to be indulged, why should the whims of so valuable a member of a community as a multi-millionaire expose him to ill-natured remarks? If charity covers a multitude of sins, then surely money, without which charity is impossible, may be allowed to cover a multitude of

Digitized by Google

oddities, and if he who possesses it cares to imitate the son of Gloster in "King Lear" and pose as a beggar in the tempest of drenching rain, or chooses a garment as trivial and as inexpensive as that which heralds the encroachment of civilization on savagery, whose business is it but his own? Mammon does pretty much as he pleases with the ethics of life, why should he be squeamish in dealing with its proprieties?

For a few minutes the carriage stopped at the office in Bishopsgate Street, and its owner, with the air of a well-groomed bear affecting the strut of a peacock, entered the building and sought the telephone closet. He called up the partner of his joys and sorrows, and an animated dialogue ensued, of which the irreproachable Chowler and the inscrutable Carfrae could only catch fragments through the unlatched door. They heard:—"Are you there?—never saw such a gossoon. He is a sorry, scrubby tatterdemalion," and then a pause. "All right, dearest, but we must." Another pause. Then, after the brief silence—"Don't appear to be astonished. Instruct the servants, and put Olympia on her guard. By, by." And the conversation ended.

Mr. Pinchover, smiling approvingly, as if the triumph of science by which sound is transmitted through miles of space was in some way indebted to him for its existence, emerged from the cupboard, nodded to Chowler, requested Carfrae to call on him during the evening, waved his glove, and looking large and breathing large, passed into the street and reentered his carriage. "To Oak Hill Hall," he ordered in a consequential way, as though duly to impress his mute and meek companion.

Mute and meek indeed, for Pitsligo had hardly opened his lips since he had disembarked, and had communed with himself and kept his own counsel while the coach was being driven to Bishopsgate Street. Now, however, that the horses' heads were turned towards what could only be a family residence, he began to talk.

"I think you should drive me to a hotel. Mr. Emden promised to arrange for me, and I supposed a room or

Digitized by Google

two would be hired for me in some quiet place of public entertainment."

"Dear me, dear me, what would you have thought of me if I had acted so inhospitably?" replied Jabez effusively. "No, no, that wouldn't have done at all. You must, first of all, see the inside of an English home, and then when you're tired of us we will find you more satisfactory quarters in some labyrinth of splendid desolation such as our great London hotels abundantly supply. Plenty of time for that."

"But what shall I do?" responded Pitsligo falteringly and evidently frightened. "I am not accustomed to homes. I am a lonely man, only a wanderer and a gatherer."

"Then you have no wife? Were you never married?" The question was propounded softly, and perhaps innocently, and yet it was an opportunity to find out whether there were expectant and rapacious heirs, an opportunity which a sagacious business man could not allow to pass unimproved. The answer also was spoken softly and with a kind of musical pathos, while the worn hand involuntarily searched for the massive jewelled trinket beneath the seedy coat.

"No, I never have been married. If I had had a wife I might not have been as rich, but I should have been happier."

"Possibly," replied the steamboat magnate somewhat dubiously, and as if he were seeking in his memory for instances to the contrary.

"Yes," resumed Pitsligo slowly and sadly, "I am quite alone in the world. Wealth purchases many things, but it fails to make friends. More frequently, I fear it makes enemies."

Jabez Pinchover, with the reproachful manner of an offended Damon to Pythias, replied: "You are unjust to yourself, Mr. Tysford, and your public spirit must have won for you the admiration of many people. Is it true that when the credit of Queensland was at low ebb you came to the relief of the Premier by giving your check,

Digitized by Google

a million sterling or more, thus taking up the entire treasury issue?"

"I believe so."

"And did you not offer two or three thousand pounds for the purpose of equipping a mounted force of two hundred men, when the Soudan Contingent was suggested?"

"Yes."

"And have you not stimulated by your gifts the raising of the splendid Colonial Contingent for the support of the imperial government in its war with the Boers?"

"I hope I did something for the success of our arms."

"These patriotic actions," added Mr. Pinchover in his largest sunflower way, "are immortal. They must have secured to you the lasting friendship of the noblest citizens of that growing commonwealth, whose development will be the glory of the twentieth century. Then there are your acts of business generosity, such as your assistance to the magnificent steamboat line, limited, which I have the honour to represent. When I recall your succour as disaster overshadowed us my heart throbs with a tumult of gratitude." And as though to restrain that highly useful organ from carrying its thankful gymnastics too far, Mr. Pinchover dramatically placed his well-gloved hand over the particular spot beneath which it was at that moment calmly repeating its monotonous pulsations.

Mr. Tysford listened demurely, but his face gave no sign. He rode on in silence for a while, and then resumed conversation by saying:

"I've been a gatherer, a gatherer of diamonds in South Africa, of gold in Australia, and of the yield of many flocks and pastures in various sections of that colony, but I'm not sure that I know the value of wealth. I have not earned it as other men have by toil, by hardy and dangerous enterprises, or by the scheming which increases the cunning of the head and diminishes the tenderness of the heart. What I have has come, so to speak, to me, almost unbidden and not always desired.

Digitized by Google

"When, therefore, I have used this treasure of mine to relieve a government or a corporation, or to help a poor man, I've never taken any credit to myself. For all I know I may only be prompted by a whim; or as some men talk because the power to talk was given them and they cannot help talking, so I may dispose of cash in the same fashion, because it came to me and must go from me, but there is no virtue in either case. The talker and the giver are alike creatures of a necessity that is on them, and which does not entitle either of them to praise."

Such supermundane modesty was inconceivable to Jabez Pinchover, and he was beginning to question the sanity of his venerable companion, when his mercenary nature was aroused by the confessions and inquiries which followed.

"I have no intention of taxing you to hear how I have lived, what have been my simple joys, or what have made up the burden of my sorrows and anxieties. I have come to England to discover whether there are any relatives alive who have claims on my estate.

"And then, while I am on this journey, I desire wise counsel as to the final disposition of my property. I can't live long, and as I meditated on shipboard the conviction deepened that I'd have an opportunity while in England to ascertain what a rich man might wisely do with his fortune. On this subject I have thought and thought until a new fear has possessed me. Suppose my riches through carelessness or bad judgment become a curse to society, what shall I do then? I'm in a monetary panic. It is not a stringent money market that troubles me. Just the reverse. The panic I suffer from is not one of imbursement but of disbursement. How am I to get rid of my money in a way that shall be for the real profit of mankind?"

Mr. Pinchover thought that he could tell him without further delay and thus relieve his troubled soul. But he was restrained by an unusual sense of diffidence, and sat speechless listening to what was to him the most remarkable instance of amiable insanity on record.

Digitized by Google

"You, Mr. Pinchover, will I trust, afford me the benefit of your experience and you probably can introduce me to others who can also advise me."

Mr. Pinchover roused from his dazed condition, hastened to assure Mr. Tysford that he would do all that he could for him, that he and his friends would spare no pains in benevolently relieving him of the burden beneath which he groaned, and, expanding his capacious bosom even to wider proportions under the influence of a virtuous determination to assist his visitor to disencumber himself of all his filthy dross, he exclaimed: "Count on me. I am to be relied on, count on me. In whatever straits you may find yourself I will be near you. Others may fail you, but Jabez Pinchover is as true as steel." He delivered this heroic little speech with righteous unction, and beaming with the magnanimous radiance of one ready to lay down his life in a good cause, he gushingly proposed that Tysford should make his house his home while prosecuting his sublime mission. To this gracious overture the reply came:

"That must not be thought of. I am grateful. But I know myself too well to accept such hospitality. What would I do in your family? No; I have yielded to your kindness for a day or two, because no other arrangements have been made, and because it gives me a chance to talk on these important matters. I would like, however, to rent a simple furnished house for six months or a year, where I would be free to live according to my own ideas, and where I might consult with such experts as would give me the benefit of their experience."

"Dear me, that is not difficult to bring about," replied the ardent Pinchover. "Leave it all to me, and I will see that you are accommodated. Dear me, dear me, just to think of it, there is now a very eligible town residence on the market—a veritable palace,—belonging to the Duke of Kincardine; but that I fear would be altogether too large, and then it would be very expensive."

"The Duke of ——? What name did you say?"

Digitized by Google

inquired Tysford with the warmth of unusual interest in his voice.

"The Duke of Kincardine—a Scottish nobleman."

"But he must have died long ago. He was an old man in the middle of the nineteenth century," responded Tysford, half-musingly, half-interrogatively.

"Goodness gracious, you're thinking of his father, Kenneth, who passed away three or four years ago; or may be—yes, it must be so—of his grandfather, whose name I have heard was Angus, and who has been dead these forty years. I'm speaking of the present Duke, Comyn, who is yet a young man, and who went campaigning with Kitchener on the Nile."

"And why does he wish to rent the family mansion? Has he come to despise the home of his ancestors?"

"No, no, far from it. He is a most worthy gentleman. But he is," and here Mr. Pinchover drew closer to his guest in confidence, and spoke in an undertone as if the people on Finchley Road were greedily listening for his tremendous secret, "he is financially embarrassed."

"I see, a spendthrift, a gamester, a reckless wastrel, squandering his patrimony on wine and women."

"Gracious goodness, I never heard any such things of his Grace. I know he is not a teetotaler, and you would hardly expect a peer of the realm like a tradesman to abstain from the bottle; and while he may not be immaculate in other respects, he is reputed to be an exemplary gentleman. In proof of this he is the honourable chairman of 'The Emancipator Mining and Building Company, Limited,' one of the most far-reaching commercial enterprises of modern times, and designed in a special way to benefit small investors of the artisan class."

"Then, though he is in need of money personally, he is capable of directing the financial affairs of a great corporation?"

"'Em, not exactly that; but his name is of value to the company. It sounds well, and inspires confidence, and then in the Duke's straits and difficulties

Digitized by Google

he has not lost anything in lending its sanction to so commendable a business venture."

"Is he paid? Does he receive a salary?"

"Gracious goodness! not at all. He is the most disinterested of souls and never calculates. His family, I understand, became involved to the point of bankruptcy through its opposition to the Hanoverian succession; and though through the frugality of his grandfather its fortunes were in some measure restored, the extravagance of his father again plunged it in debt. The 'Red Comyn,' as he is called by his intimates, inherited scarcely anything but insolvency, and as he must maintain the dignity of his name, he has been compelled to borrow largely. Among those who have befriended him are some of the largest stockholders in the Emancipator Company; and he could not very well refuse them the use of his name when they concluded that it would assist them to float their magnificent enterprise, particularly in Scotland."

"Then the Honourable Chairman is not a business man? And he is not the real manager of this great company?"

"Dear me, he has no more knowledge of business than a child. He has simply been obliging to his friends, and his friends in turn have not pressed him."

Both parties remained quiet and said nothing for a few minutes. The horses were panting as they dragged the coach up the steep ascent of Oak Hill, from whose summit an enchanting view of Hampstead is obtained. Pitsligo was the first to resume the conversation.

"You will greatly oblige me, Mr. Pinchover, if you will rent for me the Duke's London residence."

"Certainly, certainly," replied the redundant Jabez, "but the place is large and costly."

"No matter, rent it. You will find to my credit in the city remitted through the Royal Oceana Bank sufficient money to cover that expense and a little more."

Digitized by Google

"I have no doubt of it—but how about the servants?"

"Retain them, and I will decide further when I take possession of the house on my return from Scotland."

"Scotland?"

"Yes, I shall go there in a day or two, and on my return I will settle down for a while in the Duke's mansion." All this was said in a quiet matter-of-fact way, as though there was nothing extraordinary in a man of Pitsligo's appearance hiring a ducal establishment, and as though there could be no incongruity in his carrying his shabby wardrobe into the midst of ducal splendours.

"I have one more request to make. Pardon the trouble I'm giving you, but in some way I may serve you in return. You see I'm old, and though I'm not feeble, I ought to have some trusty person about me, who would travel with me and look after my needs."

"A valet!" The thought of such a thing caused the elaborate Pinchover to smile.

"No, not exactly," Tysford replied gravely, "only a worthy man on whom I could rely, and one who would be helpful."

"Yes, yes, that can be managed, I dare say. My confidential clerk will be here this evening, and I will consult him on the subject. But here we are at Oak Hill Hall. Welcome!"

The carriage had indeed reached the end of its long journey from Bishopsgate Street, and the horses' sides slowly heaved with a sense of relief. As it was late in the day, and darkness rested on the face of the earth, lights gleamed in the windows of the spacious dwelling, and streamed a glowing hospitable greeting through the wide open doorway. A couple of ladies, one excessively stout and the other extraordinarily thin, the one only relatively old, and the other not absolutely young, and both of them arrayed in goodly gowns, the one more dowdyish than stylish, and the other more fantastic than elegant, received with much

Digitized by Google

cold and formal urbanity the weary traveller from distant climes.

Pitsligo stood uneasy and abashed in their presence. His eyes were cast down, his coarse headgear was nervously moved from hand to hand, and his speech was slow, indistinct and mumbling. After a few painful moments, Jabez humanely came to his rescue, and insisted in his most magniloquent way on ushering the Australian at once to his chamber. Pitsligo withdrew as best he might from the disconcerting society of the ladies, in which he had only boggled and floundered, and was delighted with the opportunity for retirement, which the large and handsomely furnished bedroom afforded.

"In about an hour dinner will be served."

"I am fatigued. Might I just have a bit of a lunch here in my room?"

"Certainly," replied the host. "What kind of wine do you drink?"

"No liquor of any kind."

"Would you like a cigar? I have some of an excellent brand."

"I do not smoke. All I need is any simple food."

Mr. Jabez Pinchover contemplated curiously this gentle ascetic, this man of millions, who seemingly had no wants and few needs, and who could as well live on the income of a mechanic as on revenues that rivalled those of emperors and kings. To him this Midas turned anchorite was an enigma too subtle and involved for his Thrasonic mind to comprehend. And yet as he responded to the request of his guest there was a trifle less of the habitual bounce and flourish in his manner.

"My dear Mr. Tysford, remember this is Liberty Hall. Do as you please. Your meal will be served here, and as you ought to rest I'll now bid you good-night, and trust that on the morrow you'll find yourself refreshed and strong."

The head of the house quietly closed the door after him and returned to the bosom of his family. He found

Digitized by Google

his wife and daughter waiting for him in the drawing-room. He crossed the floor to where a bright coal fire shed forth a ruddy glow, turned his back to the comforting blaze, placed his hands behind him, and slightly parting the tails of his coat, as every magnate has a right to do in the intimacy of his household, he sententiously remarked:

"Our distinguished guest sends his apologies to the ladies, and as he is tired, he wishes me to say that he is in no condition to join them at dinner."

"Condition!" retorted the stout woman, the better-half and unquestionably the larger half, of the vapouring Jabez, and speaking asthmatically: "condition! I should say not. He is not in a condition to enter a respectable house. He is positively the most uncouth, untidy, and the most unwashed looking individual I ever saw. To think of such a creature sleeping between my spotless linen sheets—and—ugh! I am disgusted!"

"Within limits, my beloved wife," replied the stately Jabez, "I go with you—but you must not go too far or too fast. The man who has only to write his name on a slip of paper and fill a house with gold, is more wonderful than Aladdin before he committed the incomparable folly of losing his magic lamp, and may fairly claim the right, accorded to all potentates, of doing as he pleases."

"Yes, Jabez, that is just like you! You would have been the first to worship the golden calf in Bible times. Nothing to you is real but cash, and I have almost abandoned the hope of converting you to the ennobling doctrine that what we call the outward world is illusion and phantasmagoria, and that bodies are but the erroneous concept of the mortal mind." The good woman spoke pantingly, as though struggling for breath, and placed her flabby hand on her voluminous bosom, as if to assure herself that her fleshly hallucination had not escaped.

"Amaryllis," rejoined Jabez, "Amaryllis,"—such was the lady's Christian name, which unforeseeing and unsophisticated parents conferred on the daughter destined

Digitized by Google

to attain to such unpastoral and unarcadian proportions —"Amaryllis, you must pardon me if I seriously object to this nonsense. You are very ready, you and Olympia there, to spend this unsubstantial cash, and for females without bodies the bills for dresses, hats and material finery, are very actual indeed."

"Father, you will oblige me," exclaimed Miss Olympia, "by not including me in your criticisms of The Theosophical Therapeutæ, to whose occult sisterhood I do not belong. I have a body, and no one knows it better than myself."

"Yes, daughter, I bear witness that you do not attempt to befool yourself, though," and here the majestic Jabez smiled facetiously, an unusual condescension for him, "I sometimes think when you wear your evening gown that you expose more of your body than is necessary for purposes of demonstration."

"Father, do you mean to wound my feelings?"

"Goodness gracious, not at all. You are a dear girl—too romantic, but a dear girl, and I am willing to gratify your whims. Didn't I pay your publishers a precious sum to bring out your great classical novel, 'Alpheos and Arethusa'?"

"Father, you are unkind. If you had not been in such a hurry to see your own name on the dedication page, rival firms would have bid against each other for the privilege of giving to the public what all my friends admit is a masterpiece."

"There, there, daughter, no offence. I know you are a genius, and as for your mother!"—The wily and diplomatic Jabez perceived that that worthy woman, having recovered her wind, was on the eve of another assault—"I have no desire to controvert your mother's opinions. Let them be. It's time for dinner, and discussion spoils digestion. But, if I may, I would venture to apply Mrs. Pinchover's doctrine to our guest. If there is nothing external to us, and if everything we think we see is only our own thoughts, then the wretched coat of Mr. Tysford may only exist in our own imagina-

Digitized by Google

tion, and if we will take the pains to imagine differently to-morrow he may appear before us clothed in purple and fine linen."

An hour after dinner Mitchie Carfrae reached Oak Hill Hall, and was closeted with his chief until ten o'clock. When the interview was over, he descended the hill to the nearest cab stand in Hampstead, and directed the driver to put him down close by the Shakespeare Monument in Leicester Square.

Digitized by Google

IX

REGAINING THE LOST PARADISE OF RESPECTABILITY

WHEN Mitchie Carfrae discharged his cab he consulted his watch, and muttering, "I've ten minutes to spare," sauntered across the way and turned up Wardour Street, and entered Rupert Court where an attractive public house, presided over by a flaunting barmaid, welcomed the thirsty public in all the earlier stages of inebriation.

"Brandy and soda," were called for by the confidential clerk, and as he sipped it he added a cigarette to his other source of creature comfort. The barmaid recognized him by a familiar nod; and a group of customers of the seamy sort, both men and women, acknowledged his presence by winks and grimaces, which clearly indicated that they had seen him before, and that, though they might not know his name or position, they knew very well that he was an habitué of this and other kindred resorts.

His tipple was finished and repeated, and with a freshly lighted cigarette between his thin bloodless lips, and with never a word of good-night to any of them he left the place. Rapidly he retraced his path, and entered the open space in the midst of which stands the monument commemorating the genius of the immortal bard of Avon. A woman was already there.

"Good-night, or rather good-morning to you, for it has just gone twelve."

"I have kept my appointment, Laissina Quaco. As I wrote, it was impossible to arrange for an earlier hour. What with the arrival of the *Sovereign Queen*, and a late conference with the governor at Hampstead, it was no easy task to be here at all."

Digitized by Google

"Well, Mitchie, I'm glad you came, for there are some things I want to talk with you about."

"But," he replied, "I understood when we last separated that everything was at an end between us, and that we were to be as strangers."

"Yes," Laissina responded, "but we'll speak of that later on. Let us go to my rooms. I have a little supper for you and a bottle of wine. You must be hungry —and there in my apartments we'll not be interrupted. Come."

As she moved from the shadow of the monument, and the electric light brought her person into full relief, Mitchie started back a step or two and exclaimed, "Why Laissina, what have you been doing to yourself? Why, how you're changed, old girl."

And she was. She was no longer arrayed, as he had been accustomed to see her, in a garish and florid gown, decorated with cheap laces and blazing with imitation diamonds. No longer was her head surmounted by a ludicrously gaudy hat, and covered with a mass of variegated and inharmonious artificial flowers. Her dress was severely plain, and snugly fitted her comely, though somewhat corpulent figure; while her bonnet was as devoid of ornament as a quaker's. Every trace of paint had been removed from her cheeks and from under her eyelashes, and her hair, usually so vagrant and fluffy, was arranged in the simplest and most matronly fashion. Had it not been for a certain unhealthy pallor, and for the lack of clear shining in her eyes, she might have easily passed for a genteel, motherly woman, whose forty years or less of life, had not entirely obliterated her feminine charms. As it was the trail of the serpent was too obvious on her countenance, for a little face-washing to remove.

But if Mitchie was surprised at the transformation which had been wrought in her appearance, he was equally astonished on his arrival at her rooms on Shaftesbury Avenue to find that she had been packing, and that all signs pointed to a change of residence. The carpets

Digitized by Google

were up, the curtains were down. Dresses lay in a disorderly heap on the floor; and two or three boxes were open and were filled with miscellaneous articles. Over all the confusion a picture of the Christ, robed in a red garment, pointing with a preternaturally long finger to some imaginary writing on the ground, while a forlorn woman arrayed in sky-blue, whose dishevelled hair hid her face, knelt before Him, yet hung upon the wall, where Mitchie had often seen it when gay and riotous company filled the air with coarse songs and ribald jests.

"So, you're breaking up, are you," Carfrae remarked; "and where are you going to?"

"Why do you ask?" inquired Laissina. "You don't care so long as I keep away from you. Sit down and eat your supper. You're more interested in ham and fowl than you are in me."

Carfrae was on the eve of replying in a waspish style that she was entirely correct in her judgment, when, recollecting himself, he simply said as he took his seat at the table:

"There now, don't let's quarrel. There's no need for that. We've been very good friends, and when we part we shouldn't go our separate paths as enemies." He smiled on her in a way which he imagined was radiant with good nature, but which was rather expressive of Mephistophelian craft, and then straightway vigorously applied himself to the viands before him.

"You see, Mitchie, I'm done with the old life. A chance has at last come to me, and I can now turn my back on the past and try to be respectable again."

"Bought the public house?" inquired Carfrae with his mouth full of ham and chicken.

"No, I hadn't sufficient money, and I think something better has turned up. I'm going to be housekeeper for a wealthy old gent at the West End."

"What! you, old girl, a housekeeper!" And the idea was so ludicrous to the astounded Carfrae, whose mind it must be admitted had lost something of its

Digitized by Google

frigidity through the enlivening influence of generous port, that he roared with laughter.

"Mitchie Carfrae, that'll do. You've always made fun of my good intentions; but by this time you ought to know I'm in earnest. When two years ago I brought Tina from her country school, and you got her the place on Gower Street, said I to myself, says I, 'for my girl's sake I must be respectable;' but you, Mitchie, only jeered —and that's all the encouragement I got from you."

"No; I only told you not to make a fool of yourself, but that if you must, the best thing to do was to join the Salvation Army."

"I might have done much worse than that. And if I didn't go to General Booth it was to save you, Mitchie Carfrae."

"Save me," growled that worthy, "what do you mean?"

"Why," she answered, "if I had gone to the army I must first of all have confessed, and how could I have confessed my sins and not have published the sins of the very good Mitchie Carfrae, Esq.?"

"What!" exclaimed Carfrae: "you would have dared?"

"Yes; on the whole, I think I'd have dared. I would have told how I first met you when you were on a razzle, how I helped you; how I had kept you at a distance, and had tried to prevent your spending money which I feared was not your own, and how, because I scolded and tried to keep you right, you insisted our friendship must end, and I, seeing as how you are hopeless, consented to trouble you no more."

"Why, woman, you would have ruined me!"

"Likely, and it was because I didn't want to that I stayed away from the Salvation Army. It may be I've a soft spot in me, or it may be I've a memory of something you mightn't understand, that kept me from peaching. But anyway I was true to you, Mitchie Carfrae, and waited my time, believing that some other door would open, and that I might be able to make myself respect-

Digitized by Google

able and do you no harm at all. And now the door has opened, and I'm about to begin new, you oughtn't to sport and make fun of me."

The voice of the woman was dry and hard, without ever a touch of penitence in it; a business voice, setting forth the terms of a business transaction, and a transaction in which an awakened conscience bore no share. As she finished, her companion was evidently relieved and expressed his satisfaction in several amiable grunts.

Mollified to some extent by his changed manner, Laissina drew her chair closer to the table, swallowed a glass of old port, and composing herself to look as respectable as possible, continued:

"I wanted you to know of my good luck, Mitchie, for I shall take Tina away from the Gowanlocks in a few weeks and I wouldn't want you to think anything wrong was going to happen to her. Then, there's something so strange in the way it came about, that I says to myself, says I, 'Mitchie ought to be told; for,' says I, 'he with his long head may help me to understand things like, and if ever he wants to see me—for he's sure to get in trouble,' says I to myself, 'by and by—he will be able to come straight to me with no delay.'"

"Very considerate of you, old girl," responded Carfrae, while he was inwardly congratulating himself on his emancipation. "Yes; you're beginning to be quite a saint already." But seeing the drawn and serious expression on her face, and realizing that he had better not go too far, he added: "Just tell me all about it while I smoke another cigarette—won't you have one?"

"No; it isn't respectable in a woman as is trying to be decent."

"Oh, I forgot; but that don't apply to me."

"No; but why? Why does it go harder with a woman who has been unfortunate than with a scamp of a man?"

"Really, old girl, I'm not a philosopher, and don't understand these things." Carfrae blew smoke through his nose as though scorning further conversation on the sub-

Digitized by Google

ject; and then he added: "But you wanted to tell me of your plans and of what has been happening to you."

"I think good luck came to me after I tried to save the girl you told me of."

Her companion fairly gasped and looking like thunder, exclaimed:

"What have you been doing? You had no business to interfere, and your meddling may get me into trouble."

"Not at all. I easily found the Youtsays. The daughter was out and I didn't see her—but I saw her mother, and I told her to look out for her girl. I didn't mention you or say that you told me,—and you didn't tell me the gent's name so I couldn't blab what you know —so no harm's done."

"But what in the name of old Harry led you to put your finger in the pie?" he inquired with some warmth.

"'Well,' says I to myself, 'if I can keep that stranger girl respectable it may make it easier for me to be respectable again.' And I felt so happy over it—and then good fortune followed. Look here, Mitchie, do you remember the old bloke you used to play billiards with in Charmartan's Hotel some two years ago, when you tried to spoon and flirt with Pierette the landlord's daughter?"

"Remember! I should say so. I can never forget the venerable swindler, with his white hair, curse him! But there never was anything wrong between me and Pierette."

"No, Mitchie, I never said there was anything shady between you. But her father was afraid, and he sent her away as lady's maid or something of the kind. I had my own notions of the affair at the time, and among them was not one that the French girl was breaking her heart over Mitchie Carfrae."

"There, there, now," replied Carfrae, "don't bother me any more about the girl. She's nothing to me, I tell you; and as for the benevolent old rascal I don't want to hear any talk about him, either."

"Oh, yes you do, Mitchie; you want to hear awfully.

Digitized by Google

But, let me ask you, Mitchie, what do you think of him?"

Carfrae laid aside his cigarette, and relieved himself through his nostrils of an enormous amount of smoke, plunged his hands deep in his pockets and thrust out his rambling limbs to their full length before he undertook to answer so direct a question:

"Think of him! I suppose you mean that paleozoic individual in evening dress who plundered me so artistically in the billiard rooms at Charmartan's! Think of him! Why I think he is the most consummate and conscienceless old reprobate that ever outlived his day and generation and escaped the hangman. But what has led you to talk about the white haired rascal?"

"Because I've discovered who he is, and have found out that he's a most respectable codger, dwelling at the West End not far from Lancaster Gate, and that he's the Master of Rowallan I lived with as maid to his wife before my misfortune in South America some twenty years ago."

"Rowallan!" exclaimed Carfrae. "Powrie Rowallan, Esq., not him surely; for he is the treasurer of 'The Emancipator Mining and Building Company, Limited.' I have heard he's an old and tip-top gentleman; but I have never seen him, as he never comes to our office on Bishopsgate Street, though Mr. Pinchover is actively interested in his company. But tell me, Laissina, how do you know this?"

Mrs. Quaco replied: "You will recollect that more than once I saw the billiard player as he came out of Charmartan's and I have not forgotten his face and never can. Yesterday I saw it again."

"Yesterday! When, where?" answered Carfrae, and he leaned forward that he might not miss a word of her story.

"I had gone to Albion Street to see whether I could drive a better bargain with the man who has been offering for sale his public house. I soon satisfied myself that he would not take less than he had asked before. I

Digitized by Google

left the room behind the bar and was standing on the pavement outside, when I saw an old man run into and knocked over by a bicycle. In a moment I was by his side. He was confused, though not seriously hurt. His hat had fallen off, and I recognized him at once, and before others had a chance to arrive on the scene I found out where he lived. A policeman bustled up and a few stragglers, and a cab was called. Questions were asked by the policeman which I answered right off, and insisted that the victim of the accident should not be kept standing in the street, I informed the officer where he resided, entered the cab with the old man as though I had been his wife, and ordered the driver to push ahead to Lancaster Gate."

"Bravo! I believe you're equal to anything!" was Carfrae's admiring comment.

"In a few minutes we arrived at the house, and my companion was all serene again. I assisted him to get out of the cab, for he was stiff and sore from his shaking up, and rang the bell. The cabman I paid, and offered my arm to the old gent while we waited for the door to open. At last the servant came, a small dark skinned man, with a turban on his head and a white dress covering his other clothes and fastened round the waist by a coloured sash. He was surprised to see his master bespattered with mud and looking a trifle worse for wear, and as he assisted him into a handsomely furnished room he jabbered at a fearful rate in a tongue unknown to me."

"Well, what followed?"

"I was shown into a small dressing room where I might wash, and I was left by myself for a quarter of an hour. Wine and cake had been placed on the table, and as I took the refreshments I said to myself, says I, 'Laissina Quaco this is quite a palace you've got into. The owner,' says I, 'with its fine pictures, soft carpets and marble halls,' says I, 'never could have been tempted to rob dear Mitchie at billiards. Why,' says I to myself, says I, 'he must have millions in bank, and when he visited Charmartan's he must have been out on a lark;' and

Digitized by Google

I began to think of him as a great man, who, like princes and dukes, is altogether too respectable to do wrong though it might be wrong in office clerks or sewing women."

"Old girl, you must have felt like a princess yourself up there in all that style, and I suppose you concluded that were you to wander from the path of rectitude with all those laces and draperies about you, your own respectability would rather gain than lose by the performance," chuckled Mitchie Carfrae as he lit another cigarette and sipped a fresh glass of wine.

"No such thing. Says I to myself, says I, 'Laissina Quaco, the ten commandments were meant for poor folk and not for rich folk; leastways it don't seem to matter in this world whether rich folk keep them or not.' An' just then as I was talking to myself the servant came back. He bowed his head and brought his hands round till the fingers met in front of his forehead, and he called me Sahibah. 'Young man,' says I, 'my name is not Sahibah, but only plain Mrs. Laissina Quaco,' says I. To which he replied, 'Sahibah Quaco, the Sahib has sent me to invite you down-stairs to the library where he waits you.' Says I to myself, says I, 'it's no use talking to a flunky with a nightgown put on over his coat, a dress not as respectable as it might be,' and so I went straight along with him and said not a word. He showed me into a large room where the Sahib, as he called him, was stretched out on a sofa. He looked somewhat pale, and excused himself for not rising as he was not recovered from the shock. He directed Naoroji, the flunky, to give me a seat and then to go. An' when we were by ourselves he asked me all kinds of questions, and what my business was in Albion Street, and complimented me on doing what I had done in getting him home so quickly and with so little noise.

"Says I to myself, says I, 'the best thing to be done is to tell him the truth,' so I just hinted at my misfortune. and let him know that I wanted to buy a public house and become respectable once more. He listened and

Digitized by Google

smiled just a little, and then he said, says he, 'I am glad you have not tried to deceive me, for I could have found out all about you if I tried. You say you want to be respectable; well, I'll do a very rash thing, and one that even my saintly sister wouldn't do: I'll help you. I need a housekeeper,' says he. 'There is not a woman in the house,' says he.

"'Since I returned from India I have not had time to perfect my domestic arrangements. Some one is needed,' says he, 'to take charge of things, and from what you did to help me out of an unpleasant predicament, I judge you'll do as well as any one else,' says he. 'I am willing to give you a chance, but only on these conditions,' says he, 'that you'll abandon forever your old life; that you'll dress as becomes a woman in charge of such a house as this,' says he, 'and as one engaged in an honest calling; that you'll employ no girls as domestics whose characters are not first-class,' says he, 'and that you'll have neither eyes nor ears for whatever may take place which you may reasonably suppose I would desire to have kept secret,' says he. 'And,' he added, rising on his arm, and speaking sharply, 'you have everything to gain by being faithful, position, comfort, esteem: but if you blab,' says he, 'if you chatter, if you are not true to me, I'll turn you out into the streets,' says he, 'and will inform the police that you are not worthy of credence as you gained your situation in my house through false pretenses; and no one would doubt my assertion,' says he, 'for no one would suppose me so reckless as to trust my affairs to the care of a woman whose antecedents were not perfectly cloudless.'"

"There, old lady, Mr. Sahib had you, and what did you say to him?" inquired the much interested Carfrae.

"Say? I felt like slapping his face and bouncing out of the room; but says I to myself, says I, 'don't be rash. If I accept his offer, at once I shall be respectable, and who knows what may follow later? It's worth trying.' So I looked as grateful as I could, and getting up from my chair curtesied and said in a soft voice, 'I agree to

Digitized by Google

your terms,' says I, 'and you'll never have reason to regret the help and sympathy you are extending to a friendless and forlorn woman who is a-trying to rise,' says I. And to this he responded, 'I trust not for your own sake.'

"The conversation then turned on household affairs, and particularly on my duties, and at the end of half an hour he rang for the servant. 'Naoroji,' he said, 'tomorrow when this lady arrives you will receive her as the Sahibah and treat her accordingly.' Then he sent us both away.

"Up to this time I did not know his name. But as I was about to pass into the street I asked the Indian servant for his master's card. He placed one in my hand as he bowed me out. I walked in the direction of Hyde Park and when I reached a retired spot I looked at the card and read, 'Mr. Powrie Rowallan,' and quick as lightning it flashed on me that I was again in the service of that Master of Rowallan who got into trouble in Buenos Ayres while I was yet a girl. I almost fainted at the discovery."

"Why? What was it in the memory of those far off days that upset you?"

"The story's too long for me to tell it all now, and I am not quite sure that I could repeat it as it was," Laissina answered, "but it was something like this. When I was scarcely nineteen years old I got a situation as maid to a lady newly married who was being taken by her husband from Edinburgh to Buenos Ayres. There was considerable difference in their ages, sixteen years or so in her favour; but he was tall and handsome, and his hair was just beginning to turn white. His house in Buenos Ayres was not far from the Cabildo in the Plaza de la Victoria, and was large and richly furnished. I soon learned that he was a professor in the 'Ecole de Médecine' and was very intimate with a Prof. Jorge Avecomus who was enormously rich and clever. On the arrival of the bride and groom a lot of fêtes were given. Everything went on all right until the evening when

Digitized by Google

Jorge Avecomus held his reception in honour of the Master of Rowallan and his wife. That was the beginning of trouble. Not that a row took place during the revels; but from the moment they were ended good luck seemed to leave everybody. At the house of Professor Avecomus, a gentleman who had just returned from a visit to the Andes, where he had been doing some engineering work for a great railroad, and who had been in the English army, was introduced to my mistress. It turned out that he was Scotch and that he had known mistress when she was a little girl. He was, I should say, about as old as the Master of Rowallan, and became a constant visitor to his residence in the Plaza. A few days after the feast at Avecomus, three of the relatives of the host who had been there, connections of the Urquiza family, died of cholera, and by their death Avecomus inherited a large property. I heard my master and the Scotch gentleman talk about this sickness, and my master was irritated by some things that were said, and I remember, when the Scotchman called to mind how two former guests of Avecomus had died of yellow fever when yellow fever wasn't in Buenos Ayres, my master answered savagely, 'Do you think he murdered them?'"

"A queer question to ask," remarked Carfrae. "But I don't see what all this has to do with your endeavours to regain the lost Paradise of respectability!"

"Be patient, Mitchie, and I'll hurry. The Scotch gentleman was altogether too attentive to the Mistress of Rowallan. I was young and innocent then, and didn't understand what was going on and in which I bore a part. Months went by and my mistress was soon to be a mother. But during her seclusion letters were exchanged with her friend and I took them. This brought me into his company, and almost from the first he began to compliment me, and to treat me as I had never been treated before,—or since—as a lady born. He soon became more familiar. When I brought letters he gave me wine, and then whispered things that made me blush and

Digitized by Google

giggle, and then: well, never mind the rest; let the shame be buried."

These last words were uttered with an intensity of manner which startled Mitchie Carfrae. Laissina walked up and down the room once or twice, and stopped at a sideboard, poured out a liquid stronger than port, gulped a large glass full, and returned to the side of her companion looking very much like a cyclone suppressing itself and striving to be on its good behaviour.

"There, Laissina, don't take on in that way. Your Scotch gentleman acted like a rascal, and——"

"Hush, hush, Mitchie Carfrae, don't you say that. I won't have you insult the memory of the dead, and I won't tell you his name—at least now. But let me finish. A daughter was born to the Mistress of Rowallan. The master wasn't happy. He was jealous—he had doubts. His suspicions of his wife I knew to be groundless, and yet how could I, a servant, speak? Then, had I not carried letters? At last the crash came, and it came all at once and all together.

"My mistress received a letter from the captain, and one addressed to him by an English actress who told him that she had been the wife of the Master of Rowallan for years and was glad to learn where he was. It seems that the correspondence that had been going on between my mistress and the Scotchman referred to this marriage, though I'm certain the Scotchman was playing a double game and hoped to profit by the exposure he was so diligent to accomplish. The master hotly denied the charge which his angry wife brought against him, and in his turn accused her of infidelity, and he challenged the Scotchman to fight a duel. But during the night preceding the morning when the men were to meet two arrests were made which startled the whole of Buenos Ayres —that of Prof. Jorge Avecomus and the Master of Rowallan. Three or four, I forget which, leading citizens had died of cholera, and it was charged that they had dined a short time before at the spendid mansion of Avecomus, that he would make money by their death, and

Digitized by Google

that suspicious circumstances pointed to him as a murderer. No traces of poison were discovered in the bodies; but it was proven that he was constantly experimenting with little creatures which people can't see even with spectacles—I can't call their name."

"Do you mean bacilli? Was he a bacteriologist?"

"Yes; something of the kind. I remember it began with 'bass' for I wondered whether it had anything to do with Bass' Pale Ale."

"No; they are not the same, but," added Mitchie reflectively, "lots of them, of the delirium tremens variety are bottled up in that exhilarating compound."

"Well," Laissina continued, "the butler accused Avecomus of freezing cholera bacil—or basses—these tiny wriggling creatures—in pieces of ice which were placed in glasses of crême de menthe, and when swallowed by the guests the disease came on and swiftly carried them off."

"My! what a scheme. It beats the Borgias and the other poisoners all hollow. There's millions in it," replied Mitchie. "Never heard anything like it before. Did they hang the professor?"

"No; but he killed himself; and for a time the Master of Rowallan was shut up in prison. What came of it I don't know; but he was not hanged as he is in London to-day, and likely nothing could be proved against him, and he was released. And while he was in limbo the rest of us cleared out. My mistress took her child, and without giving any of us notice ran off from Buenos Ayres; and the Scotch gentleman and myself, after a long search for the fugitive, followed her example. We came to London, where, after squabblings and wranglings, he abandoned me. Later on, when I could sink no lower, he would call on me to borrow money, and his grave was paid for out of my earnings."

"The blackguard!"

"Hush, Mitchie Carfrae, hush, I tell you again. You are not the one to spit on his memory. Let be. The past is past! My old master, though he don't recognize

Digitized by Google

me as the girl who was once before in his employ, has given me the chance to be respectable, and if the cards are played well, through him I may be made rich, and you too, Mitchie. I suppose the swell of Lancaster Gate would spend a good deal of money rather than London should know the story of Buenos Ayres. What do you think?"

"Think! You are a genius. I never gave you credit for such shrewdness. But you're a trump, too. How can you risk your life under the same roof with this old fellow?"

"I'll take pretty good care to drink of no iced liqueur in his house, and, after all, he may not have taken a hand in the murders committed by Avecomus. I've no fear. I must take the chance, and I will."

These words were uttered by Laissina with deliberate firmness, and then she added:

"Now, Mitchie you'll know where I am, and if you think out a way by which we can both of us earn an honest penny by this secret you'll have no difficulty in reaching me."

Mitchie, who had listened intently and who had become increasingly absorbed in the narrative, had consumed too much port and had beclouded his brain with too much cigarette smoke, to see clearly the bearings and the possibilities of the story. He rose from his chair with a sort of owlish dignity, and said with more than a suspicion of thickness in his voice:

"Trust me, old girl! What a regular stunner you are. This may be worth more than stock in the 'Emancipator —Limited.' Trust me to work out a dodge to reach the old gent's bank account. But, I must off to my lodgings —it's late, or rather early."

"But why not remain here till morning?"

"No, thanks, it's only two o'clock. The walk to Gower Street will do me good. I've a latch-key; and Mrs. Gowanlock objects to her lodgers being out all night."

Digitized by Google

"Mitchie, you'll let me hear from you later, when you have thought it out?"

"Yes, yes. Laissina Quaco, I repeat it, you are a stunner, you are immense, you are 'away out of sight,' as I heard a Yankee skipper say the other day. Respectable and rich. Right you are, old girl. These are the things for which men and women high and low cheat, lie, flatter, steal and marry. So long as respectability is not lost and riches are gained they don't care what wrongs are committed against the rest of us."

Mitchie Carfrae having delivered himself of these virtuous reflections and without formal leave taking, opened the door and went out on the landing. Laissina accompanied him down-stairs to the street entrance. The worthy pair shook hands, whispered a few words, then quietly the knob was turned and Mitchie crossed the threshold. Then seized with a sudden impulse, before the lock was turned behind him, he paused and asked:

"Who did you say that contemptible and disreputable Scotchman was?"

"I didn't say."

"But tell me."

"Do you really want to know?"

"Yes."

Then gathering her strength so as to slam the door in his face almost simultaneously with her answer, she replied:

"Perhaps you may just as well know now as any other time. His name was Raeburn Carfrae—your father."

Mitchie reeled from the door as though he had been shot. He sputtered out a string of imprecations and seizing the knocker began to hammer and bang furiously for readmission. His intemperate wrath however was cooled by the gentle touch of an amiable and persuasive tongued policeman, who in the most paternal manner said:

Digitized by Google

"Move hon, young man, move hon. Hi don't want to take you hup: just put your 'at on your 'ead" (it had fallen off) "an' go 'ome."

Mitchie released the knocker. He did as he was bidden, and sullenly slunk away in the direction of Gower Street.

Digitized by Google

X

INCIDENTS OF A THREE DAYS' VISIT

PITSLIGO TYSFORD had been three days at Oak Hill Hall, and on the morrow he was to set out for Edinburgh. He was anxious to depart. The civilization of linen sheets, of canopied beds, of burnished andirons, of silver toilet sets, of slippery polished floors, of obsequious flunkies and prying chambermaids, and of complicated and priggish etiquette was not to his liking. It overawed, stifled and irritated him. He felt out of place in the midst of so much finery, and longed for the old time solitude in the Australian wilds, and for the fellowship which had grown up between him and his humble dumb friends of field and wood.

He had tried outwardly to reconcile himself, however, in some degree to his novel surroundings. He had even gone so far on the morning of the third day as to attempt the impossible task of driving a tortoise-shell comb through his tangled wilderness of hair. The sensations attending this novel experiment had provoked dubious apprehensions and serious reflections. Pitsligo found himself solemnly inquiring of himself—"And what will you do next?"—and as the answer was not satisfactory he was more than ever restless for the hour to arrive when he could turn his back on all the silken seductions of Oak Hill Hall.

The first night he had spent beneath its hospitable roof had been particularly trying, and the succeeding days had been crowded with a perplexing series of occurrences, and with the coming and going of unfamiliar forms, whose subdued and modulated voices

Digitized by Google

rang in the ears of the sensitive and shrinking Pitsligo as the harsh clanging of tocsin bells.

A dainty meal had been brought to his room soon after his arrival and had remained almost untasted. Bread, water and a little fruit were quite sufficient for his modest needs. After having eaten in a mechanical and absent-minded way, he surveyed the beautiful chamber to which he had been assigned. It was an inviting resting place, a charming retreat, whose every appointment conduced to produce the effect of substantial comfort. But it was altogether so tasteful, so spotless, and glossy, so immaculate and faultless as to seem suitable only for the slumbers of an innocent maiden. In such a room a man was an incongruity, a kind of profanation, a sort of hungry tiger in an empty sheepfold. This Pitsligo felt. He stepped lightly and stealthily over the soft carpets and ventured near the bed. Emboldened by the fact that no fair form had risen up and indignantly commanded him to depart, he touched with his rough hand the glistening white sheets, and then instantly drew back as though he suspected himself of desecrating a sacred thing. He heaved a sigh.

For over forty years he had not slept between sheets, and never in his life had he been enwrapped in such fine white linen. What he saw was to him a vision of luxury and purity, which he had always thought must forever remain only a vision to him. He closed his eyes to it, and from it turned away. The windows were open on the garden and he gazed long and ardently into the night and was refreshed by the cooling air. His mind was busy with the scenes of times that were then remote, and with memories which of late had become more than ordinarily vivid.

Suddenly his reveries ended, and he proceeded directly to a sofa and laid himself down. He breathed no prayer, he sought no blessing from the Christ of God; but his hand involuntarily clasped the heavy jewelled locket which he wore as though it were a precious amulet and all sufficient to ward off evil both from soul and body. And

Digitized by Google

thus Pitsligo Tysford passed his first night in England, dreaming of the wilderness, dreaming of mountain ranges, dreaming of calm and turbulent seas, and dreaming of one whose name he rarely uttered, but whose face was the face of a fair young girl.

Pitsligo Tysford was roused at an early hour next day by the sound of a sturdy voice singing in the garden:

"Oh! the bonnie braes of Scotland
Sae blooming and sae fair,
There's mony a hame o' kindness
And couthie dwallin' there;
And mair o' warldly happiness
Than folk wad seem to ken,
For the leal and happy heart
Maks the canty but and ben."

There was something in the melody and in the sentiment of the song that touched the listener, and he hastily drew on his brogans, put on his bonnet and approached the window.

The day had more than dawned, and in the garden a gardener was to be seen busily engaged with his plants preparing them for the approaching winter. To Pitsligo the grounds presented the aspect of a withered Eden, and he could not but think of his own beautiful Australia with its lavish luxuriousness of flowers, and with its prodigality of glowing and gorgeous vegetation. How stunted, ghost-like, pallid and ephemeral the floral treasures of the motherland appeared in comparison. The singer resumed his song:

"Oh! the bonnie braes of Scotland,
Hame o' the fair and free,
And hame it is a kindly word,
Whaure'er that hame may be;
My weary steps, I'd fain retrace
Back to the sunny days,
When youthfu' hearts together joy'd
'Mong Scotland's bonnie braes."

"I wonder," thought Pitsligo as the notes died away,

Digitized by Google

"whether Providence by these words would encourage me to retrace my weary steps back to the sunny days. Pshaw! there is no Providence. But anyway I'll take what has been sung as a good omen that I ought to persevere; and the tune and the dialect somehow make me feel as though I were in my old home already." As under a spell he opened his chamber door, quietly descended the broad stairs and passed through the great hall into the garden beyond.

As he advanced along the gravel walk he came suddenly upon the singing workman, who, startled by the vision of tattered penury, cried out in unmistakable Scotch:

"Dang my breeks if I ever saw afore sae sair forfoughten a carl. Our forbears used to say—'He that has a gude crop may thole some thistles,' but ye've had nasthing but thistles unless appearances belie ye. But how cam' ye within these groun's?"

Pitsligo replied without betraying irritation over his ungracious reception:

"I'm the guest of Mr. Pinchover, and I've just entered the garden from the house."

"Fegs! our maister is mair forsichty than tae tak' the likes o' you beneath his roof. Did ye never hear that 'a toom house is better than an ill tenant'?"

"Yes," quietly answered Pitsligo, adopting the gardener's provincial dialect, "but have ye never heard, 'sairs shouldna be sair handled,' and it may turn out, as another proverb has it, 'Ye're no as wise as Wudsie's calf, that kent milk frae water.'"

This reflection on his sagacity was more than the good nature of the gardener could endure, and he retorted sharply:

"De' ye' no ken, auld-farrant, that 'it's kittle to wauken sleeping dogs.' There, there, why waste breath on sic an ill-mannered sairy howlet o' a mon. 'It's ill to tak' the breeks aff a Hielandman,' and ye canna put 'a sweet tongue in a sour mouth.' Weel, weel, has it been said by the ancients 'Dirt parts gude company': sae,

Digitized by Google

get out o' here, auld mon, an' dinna linger or I'll set the dogs on ye."

With a kindly gleam in his eye, and with much gentleness of tone in his speech, Pitsligo observed: "'It's needless pouring water on a drowned mouse,' but remember 'it's a gude warld, but it's ill divided.'"

He slowly moved away. His face was turned towards the house; and Andrew Struthers was about to command peremptorily that he should leave the garden for the street when his eyes rested on the consequential person of Mr. Jabez Pinchover. To his utter amazement he saw the owner of the princely mansion, who was never very complaisant towards the poor, hasten forward and greet effusively and ceremoniously the beggarly looking visitor whom he had been ordering off the premises as a vagrant. His Scotch imagination was not equal to the situation.

It was not for him to intrude, or to ask questions. He must wait for the explanation to come to him, or he must seek it later on. But he could not deny what he saw; and he saw what he never had expected to witness—his worldly-minded master paying homage to dilapidation and decay. As quietly as possible he slipped away and resumed his work, and as he busied himself with his plants, without exactly knowing what he was doing, he sang:

"Gae bring the stranger in, guidwife,
Nor turn him frae the door,
But bid him rest his wearied limbs
Till that rude blast be o'er;
The carlin's freckless, frail an' auld,
His cleadin's scant and thin,
An ill he braves the winter's cauld—
Gae bring the stranger in."

The sentiment of the verse, wafted on the morning air, did not escape the notice of Pitsligo Tysford. He had taken the arm of his polite host and was being conducted to breakfast, when the voice arrested his attention and set him to thinking.

Digitized by Google

"And yet," thought he, "the same man who sings so tenderly this song of charity but a moment ago employed harsh language towards one seemingly as pitiably helpless as the wretched being for whom he now pleads so musically. Is this, I wonder, a fair sample of human brotherhood and benevolence—a sentiment that exhausts itself in poetry and hesitates to fulfill its promise in the healing and saving deed? Why blame the gardener? Would not my swaggering host also as promptly show me the door were it not for certain millions that obscure with their brightness my lowly attire? Well, I must not be too hard on him, for, as the saying is, 'The banes o' a great estate are worth the picking.'"

After this unpropitious beginning Pitsligo and Andrew became better acquainted; the former taking great pleasure in the gardener's keen sagacity, on account of which he called him the Sage of Pyketillim, as he was born in that venerable parish; and the latter doubly happy to have a listener who appreciated so highly what was said to him and who in his turn said so little. When the visit was over and Pitsligo was setting out for Scotland he placed a substantial gift in the hand of Andrew, and when the shrewd gardener examined the ten pound note he found this proverb traced on its back: "It's aye gude to be ceevil, quo' the auld wife when she beckit to the deevil."

Jabez Pinchover had no particular desire for his guest to visit the city. It would be difficult to explain the uncouth appearance of the millionaire; and on the whole it would be better for him to remain out of sight until by taking possession of the Duke's palace even Lombard Street would be convinced that whatever was unconventional about him was due to choice, not to necessity. Consequently, Pitsligo Tysford remained secluded from the great world for three days in Oak Hill Hall, and Miss Olympia discovering that he was given to early rising and to rambles in the gardens quite amiably left her own couch at an unreasonable hour and arraying herself in the most "fetching" of morning gowns broke in upon his

Digitized by Google

interviews with Andrew Struthers. She persuasively insisted on walking with him, assumed a languishing air, and became increasingly communicative and confiding. During the day whenever an opportunity presented she was by his side, and in tones bordering on the ardent inquired whether he needed anything and whether she could in any way contribute to his comfort. She strove to ingratiate herself in his good graces, and to draw from him some account of his heart experiences. As for herself, she confessed, she had been often loved, but had never yet met with one whom she could love, or at least with one—and there was one—who would really believe that she loved him. Her admirers she avowed had been too young for her, callow youths who could not appreciate the great passion and who were far below her in genius and attainments. "For," and here she became quite insinuating if not clingingly engaging, "a woman matures rapidly, and if she is gifted, cannot hope to find a kindred soul in a man of her own age. She must be mated with one older, much older, I may say very much older, than herself if she is to be understood and if she is to be made conscious of that fellowship without which there can be no happiness." And she looked searchingly under her drooping eyelashes into the wrinkled and unresponsive face of dull Pitsligo Tysford. He made no answer; for it was evidently not clear to him what he should do or say then.

"When my great story," she modestly continued, "broke on society as a new revelation of the mystery of love, few of my entranced readers perceived that when Arethusa, the nymph of Elis, fled from the enamoured Alpheos, she desired to escape from him because he was too young for her, and would rather be transformed into a fountain than submit to his adolescent affection. You must excuse my referring to the 'entranced readers'—for that is how they describe themselves." But she might have added that they could not have read this motive in her story, as she herself had not thought of it until that very moment.

Digitized by Google

"You will, I know, Mr. Tysford, honour me by reading the volume. You will find it singularly classical, full of references to Ariadne, to Hero the beloved of Leander, to Hermione, whose blundering father, Menelaus, gave her to the wrong man, to Pyrrhus instead of Orestes, also to Lucretia, to Electra, to Psyche, and to Hesione, who was rescued from the sea monster by Hercules when he had ceased to be a boy, a perpetual symbol of the immortal truth that only age or at least advanced maturity can ever satisfy the cultured maiden whose oceanic genius threatens to engulf her."

"I will gladly follow your thoughts," replied the polite but obtuse Pitsligo. "I've always read everything that promised instruction. Though my life has been a lonely one, I have managed in my solitude to have good literature for a companion, and I will be gratified to number your book among my friends."

"Thanks awfully!" she exclaimed, and she looked at him in such a way as to intimate as clearly as eyes can express themselves, that it would be more satisfactory to take the authoress along with him, or more admirable still, to remain and abandon his erratic courses and lavish his enormous fortune on her happiness. "My!" she ejaculated sharply to herself, "in that case I would soon have him shaved, and combed, and clothed to look like a gentleman."

But Pitsligo was oblivious to her benevolent intentions and had not the remotest idea that she was seeking a kindred soul in his. He was sorry for her, sorry that she should be so depressed and hopeless. He was kind to her, listened to her, but suspected nothing.

Jabez Pinchover, however, was not as simple-minded and short-sighted. Her worldly wisdom appealed to him.

He nudged her, whispered his approval, and by way of encouragement remarked, "Olympia, darling, I never gave you credit for common-sense till now. Persevere, my child, persevere, and if you succeed you will have money enough to pay for the publication of any nonsense you may be inspired to pen."

Digitized by Google

"Father, you are horrid!"

During Pitsligo Tysford's stay at Oak Hill Hall, the very sagacious Amos Odlum felt it incumbent on him to call and pay his respects. He had heard of the arrival of the Australian, and he knew in a dim foggy way of his enormous wealth and of his concern for the prosperity of "The Sovereign Australian Steamship Co., Limited." In undertaking this visit of ceremony he had no clear intentions—he never had any—and he had no new and far-reaching plans to unfold; for whenever he thought he had such plans he only announced the tremendous fact, but never unfolded them. As the head of the company, moreover, a company that was a kind of commercial evolution from a previous line of sailing ships in the same trade, it seemed to him eminently fitting that he should show attention to the guest of his junior partner. He was impressed that this act of civility on his part would be more than gratifying to the stranger, and would be treasured in his memory as one of the most gracious courtesies that had been paid him in the mother country.

The interview was not private, for the wife and daughter of Mr. Pinchover were present, and monopolized most of the conversation; and had it not been so, the men having but little in common would probably have spent most of the time in edifying silence. Courteous inquiries having been exchanged, and the commonplaces of social life regarding the weather, the markets, and current scandals having been repeated, the ponderous and yet volatile Amaryllis reverted, as was her wont, to her favourite theme—the healing marvels wrought by the Theosophical Theraputæ.

"You see, Mr. Tysford, I've been striving to persuade friend Odlum to give up physicians and physic. He's haunted by an illusion of his mortal mind that a disordered liver is undermining his health and that consequently his days on earth are numbered. Were he only to believe that he has no liver there would be an end at once to all this mental morbidness, and he'd be con-

Digitized by Google

vinced, as I am, that the liver cannot be diseased as he has no liver."

"With the utmost respect, madam, may I be permitted to say," replied the bewildered Odlum, "that it would be a blessing were your views tenable. But suppose I have no liver in the anatomical sense of that word, and that which science is pleased to designate by the obnoxious and misleading term is purely a mental aberration, what difference does it make to me, I am afflicted just the same."

"Well," responded Amaryllis, "what you have to do is to abandon doctors and drugs, and receive treatment from one of our adepts who will come to you daily and read a portion from the Bible and from the new revelation entitled 'Therapeutical Theology.'"

Poor Odlum looked as though the last part of the complex remedy might prove as tantalizing and as depressing as the disease. But before he could sputter in his explosive way a suitable answer, the amiable enthusiast, panting to recover her breath, offered to give him absent treatments herself. To which proposal the invalid murmured somewhat inaudibly: "*Absent* treatment, how nice that would be," laying an ungallant emphasis on the word "*absent*."

Pitsligo had been much interested in what had been said. It was all new to him. In his solitary and distant home he had not heard of this idealism that left nothing to idealize, and a suspicion arose in his mind that there might be some connection between what these people were talking about and the unexplained writing which was largely responsible for his return to the old world. He therefore ventured to inquire:

"I'm as a barbarian among you, and hardly know the meaning of the language you're using. May I be bold enough, without offence, to ask for further light?".

There was such deference and humility in his manner that Amaryllis, flushing with gratification, though struggling with an asthmatic cough, proceeded to expatiate on her pet theory:

Digitized by Google

"You ought to know in the first place that a gifted woman in America—an inspired woman—has restored to the world the lost doctrine of the ancient Theraputæ, who were kindred to the Essenes, and who included among their august disciples the celebrated Philo and probably at an earlier day and under a different name influenced the great Plato. Their cardinal doctrine was that God is the author of good and not of evil, and that healing is not due to material remedies but to spiritual forces. The new prophetess, however, while retaining the fundamental principle of the Theraputæ, has seen deeper than they into its significance, and has laid down the undeniable doctrine, that, as God is not the author of evil, and as nothing can exist that He has not made, there can be no real evil at all, none in the theological sense and none in the ordinary materialistic sense. Now follow me," and here she became quite excited and the flush on her face betokened, notwithstanding her hypothesis, a rush of blood to the head: "as what we call evil inheres in what we think is the body and the external world, there can be in no real sense any body or outer world either. It is all spirit, spirit or mind that creates its own shadows and terms them sicknesses, sins, and sufferings."

"But I hope," broke in the attenuated Olympia, "Mr. Tysford, you will not for a moment suppose that we are all as convinced as mamma that we have no bodies. Mamma, dear, how much do you weigh?"

"Daughter," retorted the indignant mother, "you are rude; you forget yourself. Have some respect for those who are wiser than you are."

"I have respect; but, mother dear, you forget the marvels of Loudres; and you never seem to realize that if disease is not real neither are the healings real, and if the healings are not real then the proof you appeal to does not exist."

"Olympia, you are going too far. How dare you, a mere child" (and the thirty years of Olympia blushed acknowledgment of the sweet juvenility) "array your

Digitized by Google

puny reason against the accumulated testimony of the two greatest nations on the earth. Your temerity occasions alarm for the soundness of your mind."

"To change the subject," remarked Odlum quickly, as he perceived they were on dangerous ground, "may I ask, Mr. Tysford, how long you have lived in Australia?"

"Going on fifty years. I sailed in 1852."

"That interests me very much; for my father was the chief owner of a line of clippers that sailed between England and Australia in those days. What was the name of the vessel you took passage in?"

"The *Jack Cade*."

"What, of the White Ball Line?"

"Yes."

"But she foundered at sea and not a soul survived."

"I survived."

"How?"

The manner of Pitsligo Tysford underwent a change. He had been taken by surprise, and swept along by the unexpected questions, he had spoken with unusual freedom. He had no intention of confiding in strangers however, and he, therefore, merely said, in a way which indicated that further inquiries would be distasteful:

"I was rescued the day after the fatal tempest by the whaling ship *Roland*, Captain Le Coyannet, of Havre-de-Grace. She was in a leaky condition, but after wearisome days she landed me in South Africa. I've since learned that on the homeward voyage she perished with all hands on board. I had no intelligence of her disastrous fate, however, until some twenty years after she was lost. But, excuse me, I have no desire to talk further on these sad experiences."

Mr. Odlum was very much interested indeed and would, if he could, have prosecuted his investigations. Miss Olympia had also become absorbed in the conversation which had invested the aged millionaire with the atmosphere of romance, and in her lively way she had

Digitized by Google

imagined herself another Desdemona pitying another Othello.

The embarrassing pause which followed Tysford's expressed desire was happily brought to an end by the appearance of a flurried domestic, who, courtesying, explained that an excited sailor had invaded the gardens demanding to see Mr. Tysford, and had threatened to kill Andrew Struthers if he did not allow him free access to the house. At the announcement of this violence the ladies properly screamed, and Mr. Odlum, turning pale and his already erect hair becoming, if possible, more startlingly upright, proposed to summon the police. Pitsligo did not share these agitations, and calmly informed the maid to tell the sailor that he would see him in a moment or two.

Olympia suggested that Mr. Odlum should take her father's old blunderbuss and accompany him; but that gentleman remembered that he had another and a pressing engagement and hastened to depart.

When Pitsligo entered the garden he saw Andrew, rake in hand, guarding the passageway to the house and hurling defiance in a fine assortment of Scotch expletives at the aggressor, and the aggressor himself was none other than Orlop Youtsay. The sailor had been drinking, though he was not drunk; his clothes were in disarray and were travel stained; and he was gesticulating excitedly and accentuating his motions with good round salt-sea oaths. When Pitsligo appeared on the scene the boatswain's profanity suddenly ceased, and moving in his direction, he cried out:

"Oh, sir, you're rich, you can do anything, everything,—stretch out your hand and help a shipmate, for he's sinking."

"Keep back, ye ill visaged tarry breeks. Ye hae been bousing, an' the bree has been amaist o'er much for ye. A step farther an' I'll brain ye."

"There, there, Andrew, there is no necessity for threats. I know this man, and he means no one any harm. Just leave me with him a little while." Pitsligo

Digitized by Google

spoke placidly and was so cool that the gardener had no reason for remonstrance; but as he withdrew to another part of the grounds he mumbled:

"He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar;" and "He that winna be counselled canna be helped."

When they were by themselves, Pitsligo said in a voice full of kindly feeling, "I'm glad to see you, Youtsay, but sorry that you've been drinking. You are in distress. Tell me what brought you here and what I can do to help you. Speak on, man, and do not mistrust my sympathy."

"That I couldn't do, sir, after what you did for us all aboard the *Sovereign Queen*. The men will never forget you, sir. It took a long time to make you out and our glasses were not quite equal to it; but when you did loom up out of the fog we all seed, so to speak, that you were an A 1 clipper ship an' no mistake."

"That will do, Youtsay; leave compliments alone; we can get along without them, and keep me no longer in ignorance of your errand."

"Thanks, kindly, sir, thanks;" and Youtsay nervously tugged at his trousers and rolled his quid round his tongue and under it, and finally deposited it to his satisfaction beneath the upper lip on the other side of his mouth. Ejecting regretfully an inconvenient accumulation of tobacco juice, he proceeded to, as he expressed it, "spin his sorrowful yarn."

"You see, sir, she has been lured by the false beacons of wreckers to her ruin; she has struck her flag to a pirate on the high seas; the watch was asleep and she's been sunk by a foul craft in the home harbour; she——"

"She, who on earth are you talking about?"

"Who? why, my girl, my Fiona. And may God save her, and may He d—n to everlasting——"

"Hush, hush, Youtsay, and don't go all to pieces here. What are you talking about, compose yourself and let me have your story."

With a great effort to pull himself together, the sailor proceeded:

Digitized by Google

"When the *Sovereign Queen* was berthed two days ago I stepped ashore, and my missus was waiting me. I hugged her up quite natural like, but soon found that the grapnel irons were not to her mind and that she didn't wish to come to close quarters. When I sheered off I saw the flag of distress in her face and minute guns were booming. It did not take long to make out that she was water-logged and near to sinking. Says I, 'what's up?' Says she, 'Fiona is worse than dead—she's made crooked paths for her feet, and has turned her back on her home.' Sir, when I heard this I trembled and shivered as though I had received a broadside from her majesty's ironclad *Thunderer*—and I answered, as best I could in my old way with much noise but no execution."

"And what did you do then?"

With head hanging down, and in a shamefaced way, Orlop answered:

"I'm afraid, sir, I got drunk."

"Drunk! What, drunk, and you standing by the grave of your dear child's happiness!"

"Don't be hard on me, Mr. Tysford," resumed the crestfallen sailor, "don't be hard. Remember I ain't much of a Christian, and there are thousands like me who when they gets into trouble take to the bottle. Haven't I seen a whole ship's company stave in the rum barrels and drink when drifting to death and Davy Jones' locker. You see, I'm only a common seaman after all."

"Well, now that you've sobered up, have you discovered the author of your daughter's fall?" inquired Pitsligo Tysford.

"No, sir; but I'm scouring all seas for the pirate, and you can help me run him down."

"I! Why, what can I do?"

"Let me tell you, and it please you, sir. You see, sir, Fiona was in the service of a queer old guy, an old hulk that is done up to look like a seaworthy craft, and fine gentlemen came to her office to have letters writ for them—shame on them, that they don't know how to

Digitized by Google

write themselves! One of these snobs took a fancy to my girl. My missus heard of it the very day Fiona lost her reckoning and went astray. Well, we two, missus and me, called yesterday on Miss Twyzer, and we had a regular squall, and no mistake. She up and told us that my girl had never been any better than she should be, and that if any one had been beguiled she had beguiled the young man and that he could not have deceived her. My wife blubbered and I swore, and Miss Twyzer was for calling the police; and I asked the name of the man. She protested that she did not know his name, and that he had been directed to her by the clerks of the 'Sovereign Australian Steamship Company, Limited.' So the wind hauled round, and we were glad to get off that lee shore."

"And what did you do then?"

"We went over to the company's office. And I got speech of Mr. Chowler, and when I told him my story he looked glum, and told me to go home and make no disturbance. He said that I surely didn't want to tell the whole town of my girl's shame, and he was sure the honourable gentleman would provide for her and do the gentlemanly thing. When he spoke that way I lost my bearings and I just raged, and I shook my fists in his face, and called him some names which were true enough but not necessary to repeat. Had I not thought of you at that moment I am sure I would have licked him on the spot. It came to me all of a sudden to see you, and ask you—for they won't deny you nothing—who the man is they sent to Miss Twyzer's office, and when I find him"—the sentence was not finished, but Orlop brought down one of his tremendous fists with a most significant whack into the open palm of the other.

Pitsligo saw now the part he was expected to play in this domestic tragedy; and his habitual reserve would have constrained him to decline had not his compassion been excited by the genuine agony of the man. He thought for a moment or two and then answered:

"I believe I can help you; and I'm willing on one con-

Digitized by Google

dition. The condition is simply this that you take no steps to right yourself and your daughter when you know whom you have to deal with until you consult me."

"But why?" and here the sailor raised his hand threateningly as though to indicate that there could be only one thing to do when the author of his wrongs stood revealed before him.

"Then, take your own course. I'll have no violence, and for your sake and your wife's, I'll have no exposures and public scandals. It may be that these erring ones are honourably married; and it may be, if not, that the guilty may make manly reparation by wedding the innocent child he has betrayed. We could give the whole matter to the police, and that would doubtless insure discovery, but it would also mean the stubborn opposition of the man, and the final abandonment of the woman. No; we must act cautiously, and we must in the interest of the imperilled be prepared when the time arrives to deal judiciously with the facts as they are. Do you promise? If not I wash my hands of the whole business."

Youtsay was neither so stupid nor so tipsy as to be blind to the advantages presented by Pitsligo's cool headed plan of action. But he replied that he must take counsel of his wife, who was waiting for him outside the garden door. He pushed aside the gate and hurried into the roadway. Pitsligo slowly followed and beheld him in earnest conversation with a sedate and unimpassioned woman. Her placid face and soft glowing eyes appealed to him, and his heart went out to her with a tenderness he could not account for, such as he had not felt for many weary years. Reverently he stood apart. Always timid in the presence of women and conscious of his awkwardness, his bashful embarrassment now pained him more than ever, and he shrank back into the shadow of the gateway where he could see and yet escape observation. But scarcely had he retired when the sailor overtaking him, exclaimed: "Missus says you 're right an' no mistake. And I'm to promise you everything. She's

Digitized by Google

written the address of our house on this card, and says she trusts you, and we'll wait patiently until we hear from you."

"Tell her," replied Pitsligo, taking the card, and doubting whether she ever said "he was right and no mistake" —"tell her, that it won't be long, and that I will not fail *her*—or you—in this hour of your distress."

Returning to the house, Pitsligo could not rid himself of the impression that the woman's face was not unknown to him and it seemed to follow him, to peer at him in the twilight, and to entreat him. That night he was shut up for some time with Jabez Pinchover, and from him learned that the Duke's town house had been secured for his residence while in England, and that an experienced servant had been engaged to attend to his wants. As they were withdrawing to their separate rooms, Pitsligo in his hesitating way inquired:

"Do you know of any parties, reliable and faithful who on my return would undertake my correspondence for me?"

"Certainly, certainly," answered the guileless Pinchover, "there is no firm more to be depended on than the Twyzers on Bishopsgate Street."

"Have you recommended any one lately to the firm whose report is favourable?"

"Yes—the only gentleman, I believe who has been sent there lately by us, that is, I think by Chowler, is the young Duke of Kincardine. You will meet him on your return from Scotland, and he will recommend the establishment, as I understand he has been greatly pleased by the services rendered."

"Thank you, I'll consult him. Good-night."

The next day the following note was received by the sorrowing couple in their humble home near Hackney Common.

"I'm on the track of the man. But a week must pass before I can reach him. This to let you know that progress has been made already and to encourage you to

Digitized by Google

hope, though we may be too late to prevent the mischief, we may be able to find a remedy. I'll communicate again in a few days. By the way, I have asked Mr. Pinchover to give you a holiday. You are not to go out with the next ship, and enclosed you will see your immediate needs have been provided for—£100. Don't write. TYSFORD."

And when this missive had been duly mailed, old Pitsligo shook his head at himself as though to emphasize the reflection that he was already yielding to the corrupting influences of civilization and was becoming an arch conspirator.

Digitized by Google

XI

DICK GOWANLOCK FINDS LUCRATIVE EMPLOYMENT

IT had gone half after two o'clock in the morning when Mitchie Carfrae turned his latch-key in the lock and let himself into the house on Gower Street.

Scarcely had he entered the hallway when another man, who had evidently immediately preceded him, struck a lucifer match and lit a candle. The two men confronted each other in the uncertain light, and Mitchie recognized the "Mighty Puissant Captain-General of Unconquerable Legions," vulgarly known as Sergeant Dick Gowanlock. He had just returned from a meeting of "The Sublime Grand Priory," where certain dark and tremendous secrets had been promulgated for the advantage of a few privileged neophytes, which, could they have been made public, would doubtless have convulsed the nations and have shaken the stability of the universe. These calamitous upheavals had been averted by the care which had been taken to guard the asylum from the approach of the curious and profane.

The proceedings ended, the "Mighty Puissant" had crept stealthily home, and now with the air of the cryptic solemnities yet on him, perceiving the prize lodger, he placed his finger on his lips and hoarsely whispered —"Hush!"

Mitchie, very much sobered by the startling disclosure made by Laissina Quaco and by his walk from Leicester Square, and as anxious as his landlord to retire unobserved, nodded gravely, as though he too had been engaged in some ineffable underground proceedings, and

Digitized by Google

motioned him to show the way up to his lonely bedroom.

It is currently believed that many great ideas and great inventions have come unexpectedly and suddenly to their authors. When occupied on an ordinary task, or pursuing a commonplace duty the mind has been illuminated as by a flash of lightning, and they have seen what has made them immortal benefactors. Thus poems, oratorios, paintings, political policies and labour saving machines have been born, and there is no telling the world's indebtedness to these spontaneous emanations of human genius.

Such an inspiration came to Mitchie Carfrae as he ascended the stairs. He had been deputed by Mr. Pinchover to secure the services of a safe and worthy man, one who could and would watch over the affairs of Pitsligo Tysford, and who would humour his vagaries and be to him both a companion and a valet. Who could better fulfill these conditions than Sergeant Dick Gowanlock? He had been in service and he had been in the army and was not unfamiliar with the use of his fists. He was honest, patient, good natured, and if he was a trifle droll even that weakness might not be without value. Then, more than all, the acquaintanceship that existed between them warranted the belief that without any compact being made, he would not hesitate to tell all that he might be able to learn of his new master's plans and resources, and from such knowledge what princely fortune might not his confidant coin for himself.

When the bedroom was reached Mitchie's manner became unusually affable, and having closed the door he said:

"I have the power of doing you a great service, and though you have never appreciated my kindly disposition, I am now about to prove that I am more of a friend than you suspected."

The worthy sergeant was indeed surprised, for up to that moment no secret of a secret order had been more carefully guarded than had been everything unselfish and

Digitized by Google

generous in the nature of Mitchie Carfrae. Every noble impulse, if he had one, had heretofore been jealously concealed from the eyes of cowans and eavesdroppers. No wonder then that Dick Gowanlock could hardly credit his own ears. But he listened.

"There is an enormously rich man in this country from Australia, and his business is committed to the direction of our office. He is singularly plain and unostentatious, and is liberal with his money. While he remains in Great Britain he wishes to obtain the services of an honest and efficient attendant, one who will wait on him, one who will prevent his being imposed on, and one who is sufficiently intelligent to be in a good degree a companion. The wages will be handsome, and probably the perquisites will be more than the wages. I have been asked to secure such an attendant, and I offer the situation to you."

"You're very kind," murmured the yet skeptical Dick; "but what am I—excuse me, we all must live—to pay in the way of commission for this job?"

"Nothing!"

"Nothing?" echoed the astounded sergeant.

"Of course not. You ought not to doubt the motives of your fellow-beings in this manner, and conclude that they are incapable of disinterested actions," replied Mitchie Carfrae in a large and virtuous way. "No, I charge not a penny, and it'll be sufficient compensation to earn your good-will and that of your spouse, who has seen better days. She, by this arrangement will be able to procure some of the elegancies she was formerly accustomed to, and when your brief term of service is over will in very gratitude leave you freer than ever to pursue those noble aims which are embodied in the mighty fraternal orders of which you are so brilliant an ornament."

Carfrae spoke gravely, and the sergeant, who never failed to take himself and all his doings seriously, entertained no idea that he was being ridiculed. He believed every word that had been addressed to him, and began

Digitized by Google

to blame himself for the injustice he had done this most agreeable and praiseworthy gentleman. In his inability to express himself in language of his own he fell back on a portion of the ritual employed in the transcendent degree of an "A. Z. Z.," when the candidate is exalted to the dizzy height of supernal brotherhood:

"After your weary pilgrimage and your bondage to cruel and tyrannous lords, most potent sir, and your self-emancipation from every yoke, I hail you Frater, noble and beloved. What is more sublimated, mountainous and heaven-kissing than human brotherhood? Nothing. It is the culmination, the meridian and the supreme apex of earthly relations and felicities, before whose splendours bright shining Sirius pales his 'ineffectual fires,' and Orion and the sweet Pleiades rejoice to behold a counterpart of their gleaming bands and undying influences. Of all celestial and terrestrial blessings give me brotherhood. When I am weak and feeble give me brotherhood, when I am seeking political honour and am in need of votes give me brotherhood, when I am abandoned by my wife on account of my devotion to every ennobling order outside of the domestic circle, give me brotherhood, and when I am down on my luck, and am reduced to my last tanner, and am walking on my uppers give me brotherhood—brotherhood that gives and asks not in return, that 'quaffs the flowing bowl' at its own expense, and insists on others quaffing the aforesaid bowl without charge, and that is always ready to say more than it does, and to promise more than it fulfills. Companion, to this magnanimous dignity I bid you welcome, and proceed to receive you on the ten points of fraternity and to teach you how to box the compass of its glorious obligations."

But as the speaker advanced, Carfrae with a grin on his repulsive countenance stepped back, exclaiming:

"There now, that 'll do, I understand you perfectly, and am willing to be counted brotherly, if you like, without going any farther in these initiatory rites."

Brought to his senses by this interruption, poor rattled

Digitized by Google

Dick wondered whether he had given any real secret away.

"I was only trying to let you know how your thought of me had touched my heart. I'm not much on a speech unless some one else has written it, and ——"

"But there is no need of one," answered Carfrae. "I see you'll fall in with my proposals, and we had better go to bed now, or we'll be altogether unfit for the duties of the morrow."

With the early morning, for he had been too excited to sleep much, Dick joined Tina in the subterranean parts of the house and in his kindly way assisted the little slavey. She had been polishing the fireplace and was decorated with various conclusive, if not ornamental, marks of her labour, and her soiled dress never had seemed more in peril of sliding from her thin shoulders.

Dick lit his pipe and drew in the smoke and ejected it in such a way as to indicate that his mind was absorbed with very weighty matters indeed.

"Tina," he solemnly inquired, "what would you say to my going away for a few months?"

"Ooh! What are you going away for and who's to look after you?" queried the perplexed housemaid.

"I don't know; but as we are taught in the 'Sumptuous and Palatial Order of Cherubic Philanthropists,' the public good must never stand in the way of our own advancement, and I feel as though the Hand of Destiny was pushing me out of here into something very handsome."

"Ooh! But what am I to do, particularly now that the sitting-room front and two bedrooms 'ave been taken by a actress and her maid? Heaven only knows how I'm to get on with 'em. The actress looks as though she would like to stick a skewer in me, and the maid jabbers a lot of French with her English that makes her speech like a hash o' cold mutton."

"Why, I never heard of them. When did they come?"

"They came yesterday afternoon. You'd gone off

Digitized by Google

early to a lodge, and you had not gotten as far as Tottenham Court Road when a carriage drives up and the two gets out. She heard of our apartments from Sir Walter Bessom who used to live in Russell Square, and who was often here when Signor Tallighasse was singing at Covent Garden, and who writes things up about the stage. Ooh, what a row there was when missus had to send for a man and pay him to bring up the trunks, and there was lots of 'em."

"Umph!" replied Dick disdainfully, "I am through with that kind of work. I am a going to be companion to the richest man in the world. And I'll have lots of money, and shall do something nice for you, Tina; and as for my wife"—he continued haughtily, "she will have to learn that the head of the house ——" What terrible heresy he was about to utter Tina never heard; for at that moment a shrill voice sounded from the first landing:

"Tina, have you seen that idle, good for nothing, supreme seraphic high jack-pudding of a Dick Gowanlock? If so, send him up here at once."

"I'll find him for you, marm," responded the quavering and deceitful domestic. "Ooh, you'll 'ave to hurry, Sergeant Dick, or there'll be another row."

"So be it, Tina—but remember I'm going away, and if I should never return ——"

"Ooh!"

"But I'll return and with hard cash in my pocket, and you shan't want a shilling."

Tina was in hearty sympathy with the trials and hopes of her queer master, and she would gladly have spared him the inevitable scolding by taking it herself if the exchange could have been made. But as it turned out no scolding that morning was in store for the doughty soldier. On leaving the kitchen Dick had lingered a few minutes to tidy himself up a bit before entering the awful presence, and that delay had saved him from the fury of the storm. Mitchie Carfrae had proven his good angel by pacifying the long suffering and outraged wife.

When at an uncommonly early hour he had knocked at

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Gowanlock's door and had asked for her husband, he had only called forth the contemptuous summons which had sounded ominously down into the depths of the building. He had, however, promptly used soothing words to allay her wrath; and when he had explained to her the good fortune that had come to the sergeant through his instrumentality and had pointed out what happy results might issue from it, she mellowed at once, and was so overwhelmed with tearful emotion that she was compelled to sustain herself with a drop or two, nearly the third of a tumbler full of gin neat. When Dick, therefore, timidly and on the salute, entered the room he was delighted with the gracious and genial greeting that awaited him.

"Come in, my dear husband, and be seated. Perhaps you would like to join Mr. Carfrae and myself in what we used to call in Scotland our 'morning.' A little gin will do you good. And so you're going to leave us for a while. It'll be hard to part. But, there, it is necessary, and we must bear the separation heroically. You'll come back, and we shall see better times. If not times better than those I knew in the days of my girlhood, yet better than these. We're to be congratulated that you have at last obtained a position worthy of you, as companion to that eminent man, whom Mr. Carfrae has been describing as the modern Crœsus and as a new Monte Cristo and Timon of Athens, Mr.—Mr.—what's his name, Mr. Carfrae?"

"Oh! I forgot," responded Mitchie apologetically, "I forgot to mention that his name is Pitsligo Tysford of—everywhere in Australia."

"Pitsligo Tysford of Australia, did you say?" repeated inquiringly Nancy Gowanlock, and with a pause between and an accent on each syllable as though no part of the announcement could without harm be omitted or slurred.

"Yes; Pitsligo Tysford. Do you discover anything extraordinary in the name?"

"How old a man is he?"

Digitized by Google

"I really can't say for certain; but I should think from what Mr. Pinchover told me that he's seventy and more."

"Pitsligo Tysford," Nancy continued, lingering on the name and caressing it, "and about seventy years of age. Singular! My mother was a Tysford and she had a brother, an older brother, and he was called Pitsligo."

"Quite a coincidence," ejaculated Mitchie.

"Do you know," she asked, "whether this Pitsligo was born in Australia or whether he emigrated?"

"I'm sorry not to be able to satisfy you on this point. Unfortunately I'm in complete ignorance of his birth, parentage and early associations."

"But should it be!" exclaimed Nancy almost inaudibly.

"What did you say, Mrs. Gowanlock?"

"Mr. Carfrae, I think I had better tell you and Dick what is passing through my mind. I am wondering whether this Pitsligo Tysford can be my long lost uncle. Listen—my mother often told me the story of his disappearance. It took place a long while ago—perhaps before I was born, though I am not sure about that.

"This older brother of hers was determined on bettering his fortune, and when the Australian gold fields opened he began to save money with the intention of emigrating. But his intention was several times upset by his love of drink which more than once led him to squander the small sums deposited in the bank. At last however he made a desperate effort and got together enough to set out on his journey. He never was again seen alive by any of his friends. All that was ever heard of him after this was sent in a letter to my mother in which he said that he was having a high old time in London at a place called Tiger Bay; but that in two days he was to sail on a ship—the *Jack Cade* of the White Ball Line for Australia. Not another word came from him, not even a line to say 'good-bye.' Months passed—and then a year—and yet no message from the missing one. The suspense was horrible, and mother

Digitized by Google

wrote to the managers of the company, and received for answer the sad news that her brother's name was on the list of the emigrants who went out on the *Jack Cade*, but that the ship had gone down with all hands—the place and circumstances of the disaster unknown."

Mrs. Gowanlock's morning cap vibrated and her hands twitched nervously as she recited the story, and when it was ended she rolled up her eyes as though to invoke a higher power to witness how supremely happy she would be could she only see in the flesh this truant relative—particularly if he turned out to be the master of millions.

Dick broke in upon her agitation with the obvious reflection: "If t'other Pitsligo Tysford was drownd, then Mr. Carfrae's Pitsligo can't be the t'other."

"That doesn't follow," replied Nancy sententiously, "there's many a 'slip between the cup and the lip,' and quoting the Bible, let us not forget the example of Jonah who though lost at sea was comfortably brought ashore by a whale."

"And Robinson Crusoe!" added the sergeant.

"Yes, and Robinson Crusoe," reiterated his wife. "And if these respectable individuals given up as dead could come alive again, why might not my uncle, Pitsligo, have been cast away on a desert island, or why might he not have been taken care of by a big fish, and having been found or being tired of being lost, have made up his mind to seek his friends and hand over to them all of his riches?"

To Mrs. Gowanlock these sanguine suppositions had all the force of a demonstration, and she contemplated with pity the weaker intellects that failed to follow her, and then she smiled with the smile of superior though unappreciated sagacity.

"Dick, you must allow," interposed Mitchie, "there have been wilder fancies than the one your wife has conjured up. I confess, while I am not convinced, that it's worth looking into. Who knows but that with a woman's intuition she has guessed the truth?"

The encouragement contained in these words made

Digitized by Google

Nancy fairly to beam. What he had said was to her tantamount to an acknowledgment that she was the niece and probably the heir-at-law to the untold wealth of this returned emigrant. She saw it all, or thought she did, that her uncle tired of the estrangement had decided to visit his native land and endow his relatives with his vast estates. And as she was the sole survivor she would undoubtedly become the richest woman in the world. Her imagination was so excited by these possibilities that she was considering whether it would not be the best course for her to dress herself in her goodliest apparel, seek out her beloved uncle and throwing herself on his manly bosom confess that she could no longer bear to hide her identity from him, but had decided at any and every cost to relieve his loneliness by taking him for good and all to her heaving and loving breast, when her ecstasy was cooled by Carfrae's worldly wisdom:

"We must move slowly and cautiously," he said, "wealth is suspicious and we must be sure of our ground before we put forth any claim. And fortunately we are in a position to make our inquiries unobserved. Sergeant Dick can very easily find out all we need to know —whether Mr. Tysford sailed in the *Jack Cade*, whether he had a sister, and whether he is now searching for her or her descendants. In the line of secrets Dick is a past master and he can now turn his skill to good account."

The conversation with considerable animation was pursued yet farther and the conclusion was reached that Mitchie himself should obtain all possible information regarding the antecedents of the interesting stranger, that Dick should learn all he could of his family, his history and present purposes, and then if the results warranted the line of action, Nancy should disclose herself to him and claim him as the uncle they had been searching for with tears during many weary years. Then they would kill the fatted calf, and put the uncle's rich vestments and robes on themselves, and transfer his rings to their own fingers and his money to their own pockets and would eat, drink and be merry forever after.

Digitized by Google

These details settled to their mutual satisfaction, and duly confirmed by a glass or two of port,—a wine which Nancy Gowanlock treasured as her life but which in view of her approaching affluence and return to better times she could indulge in without scruple,—and with the gallant sergeant feeling more than ever that he was indeed "The Beneficent, Supreme and Seraphic Banner Bearer," the little group went their several ways;—Mitchie to his office in the city, Dick to arrange for his departure by procuring a decent suit of clothes that would serve as a livery and yet not be unbecoming in a companion, and Nancy to her glittering dreams of palaces with marble halls, of gorgeous dresses, and of trembling domestics, whom she could scold to her heart's content, and, thinking of slatternly Tina, could cuff whenever she was so minded. But her blissful reverie was rudely ended by a tragic voice from over the banister, not unheard by Carfrae as he stood in the open hall door waiting for a cab, calling:

"Pierette, Pierette—why do you not answer?" No response.

"Plague on the girl, I suppose that beastly Charmartan has detained her, and she knew I had an early rehearsal."

The voice died away in the interior of an apartment and the bell was rung vigorously and violently.

"Tina, where are you?" now bawled the irate landlady. "Why do you not attend on Madam Thesperius?"

"I'm doing so now, marm."

"Tell me, Tina," inquired Mitchie, as the cab drove up, "who's the lady that calls so loudly?"

"That's the play actress that come yesterday."

"And who's Pierette?"

"That's her maid, and werry much of a toff she is and don't you forget it."

"So she's here," said Mitchie to himself. As he crossed the pavement to step into his cab a daintily

Digitized by Google

dressed young woman arrived and smiling on Tina entered the house; but though he raised his hat politely as she passed, she took no notice of him and did not know him.

Digitized by Google

XII

ENTERTAINING AN ANGEL UNAWARES

WHILE the confusion, turmoil and muddle which invariably signalize the departure of the Scottish Express from Euston were at their height a gentleman, accompanying a lady, his junior by only a few years, arrived on the platform and with the air of uncertainty and of troubled anxiety, not uncommon among English travellers, proceeded to take possession of a first class carriage. The gentleman, tall and still comparatively erect, was dressed faultlessly and fashionably, and white locks set off with admirable effect his handsome and expressive features.

His companion was much shorter in stature, and was simply attired in black alpaca. Her form was girlish in its proportions, slender, willowy, graceful; and, though the traces of age were perceptible in her face, her countenance was serene and saintly. She wore no ornament. Not a single ring glistened on her finger, and no precious stone adorned her white throat encircled by a piece of dainty lace. Her bonnet, like her gown, was black, the sombre hue relieved by a border of spotless frilling, her hands were covered with ordinary cotton gloves, and from her arm there hung a silk bag well filled with various useful articles. Her voice was subdued and soft, her laugh restrained and musical, and her smile, a smile that came and went like the play of sunbeams over a field of flowers, was as the radiance of a transfigured soul. Having placed her in the railway compartment her escort stood at the entrance to the carriage, prepared to separate from her as soon as the train signal for starting should be given.

"There, Angelica, your wraps and bundles are all

Digitized by Google

within reach, and your box is safe in the luggage van."

"Thank you, Powrie," she replied, "but I wish you were going with me. I do so dislike travelling alone."

"Well, sister, you know I have no interest in your philanthropic fads," he answered with a half-suppressed sneer, "and I'm not sure but you and others like your amiable self are not intensifying the evils you are so anxious to cure. If Darwin's teachings regarding the survival of the fittest are to be accepted I suppose we have a right to assume that God designed the destruction of the weak and incompetent members of the human family and that we are hopelessly contending against His decrees when we seek to preserve them by our benevolent expedients. Better let them perish like many blossoms in the orchard, whose failure to mature contributes to the fullness and sweetness of the fruit that survives."

"Ah! Powrie, that won't do. Remember what is written, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, and neither are your ways My ways.' I dare to set the conduct of Jesus Christ against the theory of the Master of Rowallan."

"Understand, Angelica, I have no expectation of converting you to common sense and practical views on these subjects—you're gone altogether too far in your eleemosynary enthusiasm for me to influence you. But I do wish you would confine your romanticism to your own abiding-place and not bear them as far afield as Scotland."

"But surely we owe something to the land of our forbears and to the country where we were reared."

"And yet, Angelica, were we rigidly to carry out that rule you should include Spain, our mother's birthplace, and the island of Java, our own."

"After all, Powrie, you may not be far wrong. But I have sometimes ventured to hope during your long absences from Great Britain that you yourself, with your scientific attainments would make your own life a blessing to those distant regions."

Digitized by Google

"I am no missionary, sister," Powrie responded flippantly, "and can't say that I believe in missions or in missionaries."

Further conversation was arrested by the guards and porters rushing up and down the platform calling on passengers to take their seats, and at the last moment looking for accommodations in the interest of excited and belated travellers.

During the jumble, tumble and scramble an octogenarian Jew was huddled into a third class compartment, though he sputtered in gutteral tones that he had a second class ticket; and a stout flabby woman, with struggling twins in her embrace and three other children holding on to her skirts, was packed unceremoniously into a smoker and began to clamour in strident tones for deliverance from the pig-pen.

As these little comedies were being enacted, and as the Master of Rowallan, after polite, if not affectionate leave taking, was closing the door on his sister, a strong man, dressed in gray, unceremoniously pushed him aside crying out to a scarecrow of a figure—"Here's room a plenty, Mr. Tysford."

"You are mistaken, my good man," replied the ruffled Master of Rowallan, "this is not a third class carriage."

"Third class yourself," retorted the valiant soldier, who had placed himself between the door of the coach and Powrie, "we're not third class any more than you are, and as this compartment is next to empty we mean to ride in it. Get in, Mr. Tysford."

The door was thrown open by the zealous attendant; the engine shrieked a low agonizing shriek; the porters and newsboys made the necessary clatter, without which an English train could not properly get off; the Master of Rowallan shouted "guard, guard"; and Pitsligo quite bewildered by the ferment and rumpus, with meekness in his manner and with uncovered head, attempted to explain; while Dick Gowanlock, after making some extraordinary signs which attracted the amused attention

Digitized by Google

of loiterers and exclaiming frantically—"Is there no help for a mother's son!" seized his master by the shoulders, hustled him into the carriage and jumped in himself. As he slammed the door against further intrusion, as Powrie stood shaking his fist, and as the train moved from the station, Jabez Pinchover, quite out of breath, reached the platform.

He had been separated from Mr. Tysford and his servant in the booking office, and now he had arrived just in time to see the train draw out of the station. Jabez did his best to allay the fury of Powrie and drew him from the crowd.

The two men sat down for a few moments in a waiting room and whispered together very earnestly. They nodded to each other, smiled and again whispered, and then they shook hands as though agreeing on some line of action—and departed.

When the train steamed out of Euston Dick was too absorbed in the consciousness of his great victory to indulge in speech.

It was his fancy that on account of his prominence in secret fraternities, if the train had not departed when it did, in response to his complicated signs and agonizing cry, a host of people would have rushed to the rescue. In his imagination, he saw them in crowds pressing forward, jostling each other in their desire to be the first to rescue an imperilled brother, and perfectly ready in their chivalric devotion to set railway authorities and even the government itself at defiance.

From this dream he was aroused by the sweet persuasive voice of Angelica Rowallan, who with beaming countenance, handed him a religious tract, and who, that he might have his attention drawn to it, announced its title: "Whither Bound? A Serious Question." Mechanically Dick accepted the leaflet, and hearing the polite interrogatory, promptly answered:

"To Edinburgh, madam, and thank you."

The misunderstanding of the sergeant was so deliciously absurd, that, greatly to her own chagrin, Angelica

Digitized by Google

could not restrain a ripple of melodious laughter. Chiding herself inwardly for her levity she attempted to explain that the tract had reference to eternal things and to the final destiny of the human soul. Religion had never particularly interested Dick. To him, as to multitudes of others similar to him in rank and intelligence, it was a theme only to be reluctantly considered when *in articulo mortis*, and therefore Angelica's correction of his blunder did not dispose him to the perusal of the solemn and salutary treatise. He held it in his hand—looked dubiously at it, as he might if he had been summoned to inspect a new and powerful explosive, and was uncertain where to put it or what to do with it. To return it was out of the question, to read it was equally so, and hence the old warrior continued to hold it fearfully, hoping that it would not go off of itself. His suspense was relieved by his master, who had not been unobservant of what had been transpiring in the carriage, and who at this point, in his own halting way, joined in the conversation.

"May I venture to remark, good lady, that if we do the best that we can with that much damaged stock in trade, which we call the soul, to meet our obligations in this world we are making the best possible preparation for the other, if there be another."

Looking with some surprise at him and strangely affected by the pathetic tone of his voice, Angelica replied:

"Surely you do not challenge the faith of mankind in immortality, and you, yourself nearing the end, cannot be among those who deny that death is only the vestibule to life eternal?"

"Far be it from my thought to put my poor feeble judgment against the hopes of the race. And yet, lady, I doubt. There have been moments in the past when this doubt has almost disappeared—but, alas! it returns again. When I have considered the brutalized millions of my race, and have realized that they are compelled by circumstances to so fierce a struggle for present existence that they cannot possibly have any interest in another, I

Digitized by Google

am tempted to abandon the belief in immortality as a wild chimera, the result of human vanity."

"Yes," said Angelica sympathetically, "I can appreciate your mistrust and the reason for it. But it is here that Holy Scripture comes to our aid."

"Excuse me, madam," replied Pitsligo sadly, "but I do not share your confidence."

"What!" she exclaimed with manifest horror, and with as marked a repugnance as though the Lawless one of the Apostasy had suddenly appeared before her, "am I in the society of an unbeliver, an atheist, an enemy to the truth of God?"

"I trust," Pitsligo responded mildly, "that I am not all your words imply. Why should I reject truth, and be its foe? If I know myself, I crave it and daily seek it. As to being an atheist—I am not quite sure. If to reject the conceptions of God presented in Boston's 'Fourfold State' and in similar books is to be an atheist, then I am one; but if to see in this many sided universe where the mystery of life contends with the mystery of death, and where the marvels of matter rival the marvels of spirit, and where the wonders of beauty challenge the wonders of motion, an all pervasive and inscrutable power from whom all things spring and by whom all things are sustained, is to be a theist, then I am one and may claim to stand exonerated from your charge. I do not think I am an atheist."

Angelica Rowallan, herself a highly intelligent, if not an intellectual woman, was much impressed by the way this forlorn man expressed himself. He might have been taken for a Diogenes or a Socrates, so coarse and raffish his outward appearance, and yet so sagely reflective in his talk. She could not but pity his dependent position; for judging by his dress and the clothes of his companion and by the high and mighty airs of the latter, she had inferred that Dick was Pitsligo Tysford's patron, who had compassionated his wretchedness and was seeking in his kind but vulgar fashion to afford him some diversion by a trip to Scotland. This supposition led her to spare

Digitized by Google

the old soldier some of her benignant smiles, a graciousness to which he was utterly oblivious as by this time he was complacently snoring, holding in his clenched fist the unread tract, and dreaming of the dignities and lofty potentialities of his beloved secret orders.

After the pause of a few minutes at Preston and when they were off again, Angelica returned to the subject of their conversation and reminded Pitsligo that he had not informed her as to the views he held regarding the value of the Bible.

"May I confess it," he replied, "without unduly shocking you, that I have not read the Scriptures for over forty years, aye, nearer on to fifty. During all that time I have never been without a Bible. My mother gave me one, and I have carried it with me wherever I have gone. My treasures are few. I believe only two; that book, and a tiny handkerchief."

"A woman's I'll be sworn, and she not your mother."

"In my old age I do not blush to own I have carried it near my heart from early manhood—and when I die it will be found there. And you say truly, madam, it was not my mother's."

"And I suppose," added Angelica reprovingly, "you have often looked on that, while your mother's Bible has had no charm for your eye."

"Yet, madam, do not judge me harshly. Hear me. I was reared in a strict Presbyterian family and my early years were darkened by frightful shadows. Satan in those times had, according to current beliefs, more to do with life than God. He was everywhere working mischief and whatever occurred, strange or evil, was attributed to his agency. To childish fancy he was more potent than the good Spirit; for every day it was shown us what terrible things he accomplished which Infinite Benevolence could not prevent, while Infinite Benevolence was never credited with any special interpositions on behalf of His creatures. What God did belonged to the distant past, to Bible seasons; but in the present He did nothing.

Digitized by Google

"Still we were assured that Jehovah cared for His own, for the elect, and that all things would and should work together for their good. Judge then of my perplexity when I saw my father sink from the high level of respectability as an office bearer in the church through strong drink and entail on his family shame and poverty. God had not kept His own elect——"

"But," interposed Angelica earnestly, "why should you suppose he had been the elect of God? By their fruits ye shall know them."

"Madam, I am not unacquainted with that easy explanation. But on the other hand God promises to keep, and if the promise means anything it cannot mean that God only keeps those who keep themselves but keeps those who cannot keep themselves. Why then was my father abandoned?"

"God's ways are past finding out!" exclaimed Angelica with much devoutness in her manner.

"Truly; and yet such instances as my father's are surely susceptible of a simple explanation. But what shall be said of the Divine faithfulness when the rest of this pitiable story is recalled? The son of this deacon, the son of a conscientious and praying mother, and a youth harmless and blameless, is arrested for a crime he never committed and to escape an unjust sentence has to slink away a fugitive from his native land and from those he loves. Where does God's remembrance of His saints come in, where does His righteousness reveal itself, as we contemplate this ruined home and these broken hearts? And are you astonished that faith should be shaken, and that a book should cease to charm which repeatedly announces what our experience contradicts?"

Pitsligo spoke intensely though in subdued tones, not without reverence, and as one who regretted that he had been deprived of his belief in the Christianity of his sires. Angelica had listened intently and was anxious to comfort this lonely old man. Yet it was not easy to render her sympathy serviceable to him. There was in his story that which recalled memories of her own, which resem-

Digitized by Google

bled melancholy days she had long striven to forget, and which roused in her own breast painful and conflicting emotions. But her own dim and sad recollections could have no connection with the narrative she had listened to. Only a coincidence—nothing more. After a moment or two's hesitation, therefore, she ventured to observe that "God doubtless knows how to compensate for all trials and losses. Usually when He takes away one thing He gives another. Now, even you, may have received more than an equivalent for that of which you have been deprived."

"I—I, an equivalent! an equivalent for the good opinion of my neighbours, for the love of my mother, and for the love of the purest and most honourable heart that ever beat in a woman's breast! What equivalent, what compensation?" And he struggled in his speech with overpowering emotion—almost indignation. Angelica realized the folly of her well-intentioned remark. True enough, she thought, what compensation had he, so poor that his clothes were not fit for a self-respecting man to wear, and so poor that he was receiving as a charity the present opportunity to view the beauties of nature from the hands of one who was evidently his inferior in intelligence but who by some caprice of fortune had become rich. Compensation indeed!

Angelica was silent, and directed her attention to the passing scenery as the train rushed on. A brief halt startled Sergeant Gowanlock to the flight of time and to the clamorous demands of the inner man for lunch. Baskets with railroad edibles had been supplied the travellers and were now called into service. Angelica could not but notice that Pitsligo ate very little, only the bread, cheese and lettuce, and that he did not taste the wine, an abstemiousness which she attributed to his wish not to tax unduly the generosity of his benefactor. The Sergeant, however, made up for his lack of appetite, and speedily disposed of all the viands, liquor included. When the repast was ended, the brave soldier went into the corridor of the carriage in search

Digitized by Google

of a compartment where he might enjoy the solace of tobacco.

Left to themselves Angelica said inquiringly: "You don't smoke?"

"No,"—spoken softly.

"An expensive habit, I presume," she continued, mentally assuming that to be the reason for Tysford's self-abnegation.

"I have heard so." That was all.

They rode on for nearly an hour without talking. At last wearied with the monotony, Angelica, thinking she might interest herself and profit him, asked whether he would lend her his Bible—her own was inaccessible—that she might direct his attention to some passages which were suggestive of gracious answers to his difficulties. Without a word, but with a courteous inclination of his head, he drew a small copy of the sacred text from his frayed and seamy coat and placed it in her hands.

It was tied with a string, and looking at her companion through her gold-rimmed spectacles for permission she undid it, and as she opened it a bit of paper, unnoticed by her, fell on her lap. She selected the eighth chapter of Romans and read it through, musically and expressively, annotating here and there. Pitsligo was entranced. Never had he heard such reading and never had the Word of God appealed to him before. It was to him a new revelation, and when the reading was over he reached out his hand for the book that he might satisfy himself that what he had listened to was really there. Complying with his mute desire, Angelica for the first time saw the paper that rested so innocently before her. She picked it up and exclaimed: "Why! where could that have come from?"

Seeing her hold it within range of her glasses, and hearing her query, Pitsligo looked up, and recognizing it, answered:

"Oh! it is mine, it must have fallen from my Bible where I had placed it for security."

Digitized by Google

"Impossible," she replied, "for it is in my handwriting."

"Yours!"

"Yes; I don't remember ever penning these words, 'Come, for I need you—Come!' but that I am right in my assertion can easily be proven." And turning the paper round she took a pencil and without hesitation scribbled the sentence on the back. The resemblance was so close that it was not easy to decide which was the original and which the copy. She looked perplexed and even troubled. Pitsligo on his part turned his eyes searchingly on Angelica.

Up to this moment he had not scrutinized her closely; but now he gazed on her timorously and inquiringly. He seemed to be seeking for something that could not be found, and to be striving to settle some serious controversy with himself. Dismissing from his mind the conflict which was filling him with awe not unmixed with alarm, he ingenuously detailed how the writing had come to him in far-off Australia and how it had impelled him to journey from the antipodes. His recital provoked Angelica to some expressions of incredulity. In his narrative he had kept himself exclusively to the facts relating to the origin of the writing, and had not intruded on her any further details of his personal history. Consequently, she was still in the dark, and was not in a position to do justice in any sense to the mystery. Reading in some degree what was passing in her mind, Pitsligo resumed:

"Yesterday I heard for the first time that it was possible for one mind at a distance from another to give absent treatment so that healing virtue might be transmitted through space without a medium. This seemed to furnish a key to the origin of the writing. If one afar off can so influence another as to restore bodily health, why may not the same mental force, though as wide apart as the poles, convey a message by controlling the hand of an absent friend to transcribe it on paper? The volition of the patient goes for nothing in disease, and why

Digitized by Google

may it not be equally unnecessary in conveying intelligence?"

"But," quickly answered Angelica, "in either case the operator must have some thought of the person whom he would influence, and as I have not met you before, and have never known you, and do not know you, it is inconceivable that I should have sent the perplexing message."

"Truly," responded Pitsligo, "but that only adds another difficulty to the problem."

"No; it eliminates me from the problem altogether."

"Possibly; but," uttered in an absent-minded way, "what shall I do now?"

"Really I am afraid I can't advise you."

Pitsligo did not hear her regret. He had fallen into one of his reveries, and was debating grave contingencies with himself. This mood, however, did not long continue, as the train came to a halt at Carlisle, and the usual pandemonium of noise and confusion reigned along the platforms in the railway station, and would have startled the Seven Sleepers from their repose. No wonder then that they disturbed the reflections of Pitsligo, who emerged from them inquiring of unheeding space, "What shall I do now?" just as he had lapsed into them propounding the same conundrum. Sergeant Dick likewise came from his retirement odoriferous with smoke, and bent on scrutinizing the faces of the people hurrying to and fro for those peculiar facial expressions which betoken membership in the mystic fraternities. He also made various signs, one of which being mistaken by a jealous husband for a too affectionate greeting to his charming wife evoked manifold threats of condign punishment. While this extravagant pantomime was in course of performance, the octogenarian Jew, perspiring, although the weather was cool, from every pore of his oleaginous skin, was declaiming vehemently against the injustice that had deprived him of his second class accommodations for which he had paid.

Much that the outraged Hebrew said was unintelligible on account of his frenzied rage; but a few sentences

Digitized by Google

could be made out, such as: "Yes, I ish a jews and you treats me"—"My names is Ichabod Raphiel and I lives"—"You's shall pay for this by's holy Moses"—"Vate tills I sells out your poor Scotch dukes, your Kincardines and then—v'y I'sh sues yer scoundrel companies." He could proceed no further for suffocation threatened him, and more than that a policeman had arrived who politely intimated that if he did not stop his noise he would be "run in." Stupefaction and horror laid hold of the infuriated Ichabod at the very sight of law's representative, and he hastened back to his ignominious third class compartment, but still clenching his fists and vowing vengeance. He had hardly taken his seat when a courteous official came along inspecting tickets, and as soon as he saw the one the Jew held, he said:

"You are in the wrong coach. I'll transfer you to a second class carriage."

But now the Jew, dreaming pleasantly of an action at law, began to remonstrate that he had been obliged to suffer this inconvenience during most of the journey and he would not change now. The official, himself also thinking unpleasantly of possible legal proceedings, would take no denial, and summoning help, led the grumbling Jew to the second class compartment of the very corridor carriage which had borne Tysford and his companions throughout the day. With profuse apologies on the part of the railroad official he was assisted into the conveyance, while he kept on asseverating loudly that his non-resistance was not to be taken as an abandonment of his claims for damages on account of the inconvenience he had suffered, and the indignity that had been put upon him.

The departure of the train, however, cut short additional controversy; although it did not terminate the Jew's anger who continued talking with himself, excitedly, as to what disposition he should make of the railroad company. Something about the man, and particularly some words he had let fall concerning his business in Scotland, roused the interest of Pitsligo. He

Digitized by Google

entered the corridor and after once slowly passing the door of the second class compartment, came back and took his seat not far from Ichabod Raphiel.

The Jew was dumbfounded. That such a forlorn creature, whose garments no second-hand dealer among the children of Abraham would accept as a gift, should be permitted to desecrate the section for which he had paid and which he had no intention of sharing with a beggar, was at once construed by the occupant to be another premeditated insult. This last slight put upon him, to his inflamed imagination, was more brutal than the first. But he would not tamely submit. He raised his voice, and screamed:

"Vat business have yous heres, yous ragamuffin, yous chiffonnier, yous starvelings mendicant—how dares yous comes and sits down by a shentlemans like mes—off vids yous; goes to yous third clash or the luggage vans or——"

"Hush, hush, Ichabod Raphiel—I heard you call your name," answered Pitsligo with imperturbable calmness, "and if my memory does not fail me we met many years ago in Tiger Bay and——"

The mention of Tiger Bay wrought an instantaneous change in the Jew. His anger suddenly gave way to alarm, and he moved towards the signal cord, as though one of the criminal class from that old-time disreputable neighbourhood had invaded his compartment for the purpose of robbery or revenge.

Without rising, and without betraying any emotion Pitsligo slowly said:

"Withhold your hand. I mean no harm. I wished merely to satisfy myself that you are the man I knew in Tiger Bay nearly half a century ago. You do not recognize me. So be it. I shall not enlighten you. But I know you. I heard you speak on the platform of the Duke of Kincardine, and I want to say to you, if you have him in your talons and if you tear or lacerate him, woe to you. As you belong to a money lending race, it may be that he owes you money and in that case——"

Digitized by Google

"Yes, yes, that's all, my dears," promptly answered the Jew. "I would not harms a hair of hish head. But hish father's borrowed, an' the sons borrowed—an' the mortgages due to-morrows £20,000—an' I'sh poors and must protects my owns."

"Thank you, that's all I want to know. The mortgage shall be paid to-morrow. I'll pay it."

"Yous, yous, vy I shoulds be amazed if you had twenty pennies, for ven I looks as yous——"

"Never mind my looks or yours," replied Pitsligo still perfectly unruffled. "Say, if you will that I am the Duke's agent, or what you please, the money is ready for you to-morrow by noon at the Royal Hotel. But," and as he rose to go he spoke with threatening sternness, "no trickery. Do what you ought to do and all will be well, but—beware!"

That was all; and he returned to his own compartment, leaving the Jew a prey to torturing fears. There he had a whispered conversation with Dick, and soon afterwards the distinguished soldier paid a visit to the Jew. He found him pale and nervous. To tell the truth the Hebrew was much perplexed. He had been mixed up with so many shady transactions during his long life that he was ready to take alarm whenever a threat was made, and he was not quite sure as to which of his numerous misdeeds his remarkable visitor could have referred.

The Sergeant to a degree restored his composure and even his self-respect. Reaching the door he saluted, and his smart attire and his manner made a favourable impression on the Hebrew:

"My master sends his compliments and desires me to say that he will be glad to attend to the business you have in hand this evening so that to-morrow before the time the mortgage expires he may be able to wire to London and have the necessary cash on deposit in the Bank of Scotland."

"Very considerate, and rights too for £20,000 ish a large sums."

Digitized by Google

"Yes, so it is; but we don't think nothing of that. If it were £100,000 it would be all the same."

"Your mashter, then, must be very richs."

"Raather!" exclaimed the Sergeant.

"Then vys doesh he dresh like an East ends cadger who can't affords a cubicle in a doss house?"

"Dunno. Suppose he can afford to dress as he pleases. He's so rich he don't care."

"Whens I comes to hotel who am I to ask for?"

"He says, you're to inquire for Sergeant Dick Gowanlock."

"So be it." Another salutation and Ichabod Raphiel was left to himself.

While these interviews were progressing and the train was rapidly approaching its destination, Angelica sat apart and meditated. Every now and then, unseen by Pitsligo, she glanced through her glasses inquisitively into his face. Her eyes would return to him after they had been temporarily withdrawn, and she would renew and again renew her earnest examination. When, after an exceptionally prolonged gaze, she directed her attention to the Pentland Hills now coming into view, tears could not be repressed, and she wept unobserved. Moreover, as the city was approached Pitsligo became more and more reticent and uncommuicative. He had lost all thought of his companions, and was thinking, thinking, thinking, of—something else. Nor was he shaken out of his lethargic indifference to his surroundings until, with the clatter and bustle of the Caledonian Station falling on his ears, he realized that the train had reached its destination.

He was in Edinburgh town. Having come to himself, he saw the turbulent and troubled Jew shoot out of his compartment as though fired from a mortar; and he saw a company of young women, poorly but neatly clad, pressing forwards to receive and welcome the lady who had interested him so much during the journey. He heard one of them say: "Here comes the angel!" and the little crowd cheerfully repeated the name and

Digitized by Google

thronged round her as she alighted, all smiles, to the platform. A girl with her hair hanging loosely down her back and with no shoes on her feet stepped forward, and not without grace, presented her with a small bouquet of humble flowers. Others seized her hand-luggage and extended their arms affectionately to help her. Before she passed out of sight with her lowly friends, she turned to Pitsligo and Dick to say good-bye, and drawing the Sergeant aside by one of her attractive and beaming glances, she said in an undertone:

"Let me thank you for what you are doing for the comfort and enjoyment of that poor old man. It is very good in you. To-morrow I may desire to send him a little help myself, tell me what name I shall address, and where are you staying in Edinburgh?"

"My stars! what are you talking about? Help him!" And here the Sergeant came very near laughing in the fair old lady's face. But noting her impatience and realizing his own duties to his employer he only added: "Pitsligo Tysford, Esq., Royal Hotel." The word "esquire" grated on her sensitive nature and she shrank back from one who could, according to her understanding of the situation, mock the homelessness and wretchedness of the aged. With more haughtiness in her manner than she had hitherto evinced, and with a lingering look at the object of her solicitude, she replied: "Thank you," and turning round was immediately swallowed up in the group of her noisy and affectionate admirers, and straightway was lost to sight.

"Did you learn her name?" inquired Pitsligo as Dick began to pilot him to a cab.

"No; only I heard the girls call her the 'angel.'"

"Yes; I heard that myself; but what did she say then?"

"She was curious to know your name, sir; that was all."

They entered a cab and were driven to the Royal Hotel, where through the forethought of Jabez who had wired for the rooms, a parlor and two chambers on the

Digitized by Google

first floor were waiting for them. It was well that Dick alighted first and went by himself to claim these apartments; for from the horror-stricken countenance of the porters when Pitsligo entered the magnificent caravansary had he demanded them in person he would have been immediately ordered into the street. As it was, he was allowed to pass; and as he took possession of his attractive quarters, he talked softly to himself, caring nothing for the presence of Dick, and probably not knowing that he was near:

"For a moment I thought it might be! But my Angelica, my angel, had never the shadow of a wrinkle in her face nor a trace of silver in her raven hair. How young, how radiant, how beautiful, how like the charm of the dawning day she was; *was*, WAS—but, great God, that was nearly fifty years ago!"

Digitized by Google

XIII

BITTER MEMORIES OF OTHER DAYS

LATER in the evening Ichabod Raphiel, according to his promise, called at the hotel bringing with him the papers and the Duke's lawyer. Pitsligo agreed that the sum of £20,000 to cancel the mortgage, should be in the Bank of Scotland payable to the order of the lawyer on the next day by noon, and a further sum of £1,000 to be divided between him and the Jew to compensate for loss or trouble. It would take a few days for all details to be perfected, and in the meanwhile he stipulated that, as he might become the ultimate owner of the estate, he should have the necessary authority to visit the palace and to stay there if he so desired. He further directed that the domestics should not be disturbed, and that arrears of wages should be paid in his name—and he placed in the lawyer's hands a bundle of bank notes for that purpose. The two men were dazzled by this easy disposition of wealth. No haggling, no bartering, no cheapening, no penurious calculations, but an open, straightforward, princely way of conducting financial affairs. They were bewildered. After this fashion they had never seen it, and it rebuked their own sordidness.

That this shabby, sorry figure was equal to his engagements they could hardly doubt. The large sum he had placed in the lawyer's hand, the expensiveness of the suite of rooms he occupied, and the statement of the landlord, privately made, that Mr. Tysford had been committed to his watchful care by one of the leading and wealthiest London business houses, were sufficient to allay the impression that they might be duped by a vagrant or a lunatic. The Jew, however, as he went out,

Digitized by Google

was not merely amazed at the lavishness of this singular man, but tortured himself with mental suppositions and surmises: "Where had they met? When? What dealings had they had with each other in that buried past? Was there not something in their intercourse then, that might give him a hold on the purse of the millionaire now?"

Pitsligo Tysford! The name was uncommon but not altogether unfamiliar to him. Where and when had he heard it? Ah! if he could only recall the circumstances of their former meeting, notwithstanding the threatening bearing of the plutocrat, something might be construed to his discredit, and he, the despised Hebrew, might be able to squeeze, to squeeze and yet to squeeze—and as he entered Prince's Street his fists were clenched, and nails were driven into the flesh as though he were squeezing the last drop of blood from the heart of an enemy, or, what was more in keeping with his mood, were squeezing out the last coin from his money bags.

When breakfast was served next morning Dick Gowanlock discovered that his master was absent. He had left his apartments at an early hour, and had been wandering over Carlton Hill, enjoying the morning air and feasting on the view of the Firth of Forth and the coast line of Fife beyond. On his return from this delightful ramble he found a letter by the side of his plate, and on opening it he recognized the handwriting as similar to the message that had come to him in Australia, and to his yet greater astonishment he saw that a £5 note had been enclosed. The communication ran as follows:

"Dawney! if you are Dawney Macgillivray you will know who writes this though it is unsigned and you will know where to seek her. If you are not, and if my heart has deceived me, you may yet find in your poverty the small sum enclosed of service. My pity is yours whoever you are. And so Dawney, if you are Dawney, I remain your friend unto death."

The old man read and re-read this epistle until he had its contents by heart, and with moistened eyes he drew

Digitized by Google

from his bosom the gorgeous locket he carried and contemplated the faded remembrance it contained. There was in his demeanour something of the manner of one who had unexpectedly been summoned to attend a funeral. He walked about the room as in the chamber of the dead, and when he sat down again he had no appetite for food. This, then, was Angelica. Thus had he never pictured her. To him she had always been the girl, light of foot, with eyes luminous, like the beauty of the sunrise, brightening with their softened splendour her black silken tresses, as the radiant morn might illumine with its brightness the thick clouds of night still clinging fondly to its brow.

It had never occurred to him that she could grow old, and that she would ever reach a time when she could no longer trip joyously over the lea, or laugh the sweet laugh of careless maidenhood. Attractive and fair she might be in her old age; but she was not the same as when he held her in his arms so long ago and kissed her a reluctant and sorrowful farewell. The Angelica of bygone days was dead and buried. She had been wrapped in the white robes of her innocence, had been garlanded with the flowers of affection and had forever ceased to be among the living. Henceforth, as for him, he only had a memory to cherish, an unsubstantial image to love, a form to clutch at in his dreams as evanescent as the dreams themselves.

But this other woman, this lovely shadow of the lovelier woman dead—how should he act towards her? Shall he confirm her surmises? Shall he revive the past? Her letter is full of compassion, of commiseration, but not a word of love.

His poor old head was in a whirl and his indecision increased. To deny his identity, to return the money would be to act dishonestly and discourteously. No; he will not offend against his own integrity or against her compassion. God forbid! He will not write; but he will seek her out and tell her all. She, perhaps, more easily than any one else may be able to guide him in his quest, and

Digitized by Google

though the interview may end in fatally disillusioning him and in forever depriving him of that presence which has been with him for so many years in the wilderness, still has it not already lost something of its subtle and perennial charm and can it ever be in the future what it has been in the past?

"Pardon me, sir, but your breakfast is getting cold," modestly suggested Dick.

"Thanks, thanks, but I am not hungry, and you need not wait. I desire to be quite alone to-day."

"But can't I help you, sir, and make some inquiries for you?"

"No; not to-day. The letter you saw me read opens the way for me to find out all I wish to know about my kindred, especially about my sister."

"You have a sister then, sir?" ejaculated Dick almost beside himself with joy—for that announcement confirmed his wife's impressions, and naturally encouraged her expectations. "But, shall I ascertain at what time trains depart for Stirling?"

"Stirling! and what for will you be travelling to Stirling?" answered Pitsligo.

Dick was quick enough to see that he was going too far, and he hastened to reply:

"Only, I thought, sir, you would like to see the castle and the lovely scenery."

"And what should I do then?"

"Well, you might learn something about—to your advantage, that is all."

"There's no necessity for travelling to Stirling; but if you would like to take a run to the old town you are quite at liberty to do so as I shall be very much occupied to-day."

A pause ensued and the sergeant, saluting, was about to withdraw, when he was arrested by Tysford, who continued:

"Do not think of me for the rest of the day. You may not know it, but I was born in Scotland, and naturally I desire to visit some familiar localities. Besides

Digitized by Google

I have to wire my London bankers. Consequently, I may not return to the hotel till late and possibly not until the morning. Do with yourself as you please and don't be anxious if you do not see me until to-morrow."

Dick went out, and going to the nearest telegraph office, sent a message to Gower Street: "All well. He was born in Scotland and is looking for a sister." This duty discharged, he addressed himself to the congenial task of searching out lodges of the various fraternities with which he was affiliated, and decided on spending the night with brethren of high degree in one of the mystic circles, which not only ornamented but guarded the ancient burgh.

Pitsligo took his staff and descending to the street, hired a cab. The driver was instructed to put him down at the Roslin end of the Castle Melville estate through which the Esk winds its devious way towards Eskburgh. Reaching the spot he alighted, and as one knowing the path and ignorant of the more recent desecration of the river's beauty by the inroads of factories and machinery, he entered the grounds and lifted his worn hat in recognition of the stately beech trees whose majestic boughs swayed him a graceful welcome. It was night when he painfully climbed the brae in the neighbourhood of quaint old Eskburgh, and slipped unobserved into the park of Kincardine palace.

He moved through the darkness as one not unfamiliar with the way, and reached a spot from whence he could observe a window in which gleamed brightly a cheerful light. Half an hour or more may have passed, when he was startled by what he had looked for and had hardly expected to see, a woman's form, almost girlish and clothed in spotless white. The face was not visible, but the outlines of her figure were distinctly manifest as she came to gaze from the balcony of her chamber on the peaceful heavens.

To Pitsligo her presence was the presence of a phantom. Thus had he contemplated in his youth from that very spot a maiden fair, whose image had been en-

Digitized by Google

shrined in his innermost soul, and whose kiss of love had kept him in desperate hours from destruction. She was long since dead. Was this her spirit returned from the unseen sadly to welcome him home and to inspire him with hope of a heavenly and eternal reunion? In the thick gloom, and with the light of her room burning at her back, neither wrinkles nor silvery hair could be distinguished.

The illusion was complete. It was Angelica as he had known her half a century gone, girlish, beautiful—at least to him. But Angelica was dead. He had seen her corpse. Serene, sweet, smiling, and with just a touch of pink on the cheek, as often the memory of life survives in death. He had seen it arrayed in black and ready for the burying. This vision of undecaying maidenhood that filled his eyes, then, could only be the spectre of one who in the flesh would gladden earth, alas! nevermore. Irresistibly and earnestly, as though he himself again were young, the old man stretched out his hands and cried aloud: "Angelica!" And from the lips of the white-robed figure came a responsive voice: "Dawney!"

What further intercourse might have followed cannot be conjectured now; for as these names were interchanged the fierce baying of hounds and the tramp of hurrying feet were heard, and in a moment several gillies and domestics, armed with sticks and staves, appeared upon the scene. They urged the dogs to seize the intruder and ominously flourished their weapons over his venerable head. Pitsligo received the onslaught with an impassiveness that stayed the frenzy of his assailants; and arrested the furious animals as they rushed towards him by the soothing and musical charm of his speech. The hounds, instead of rending him, suddenly fawned at his feet, subdued by the same personal influence that had made the beasts and birds of the Australian wilderness his confiding and humble friends. This extraordinary conquest of a stranger over these household guardians quite startled the domestics, and before they had had time to recover from their stupefaction the lady, yet standing

Digitized by Google

on the balcony and sharing in the general turmoil of feeling, called out pleadingly and commandingly:

"Pinkie Cleuch, if you are there, do the man no harm, but invite him within the palace and I will speak to him myself. No violence—no violence, you understand."

"Me leddy," answered a lank, shrivelled, aged gillie, whose small, blinking, watery eyes were bordered with raw blood-red lashless lids, "ye'll no be taking this onmauen intae th' house; he is a runkled, wizen'd kail-runt o' a loon, wha' is no eerie when the tykes rin at him, an' he'll no fech't an' he's feckless. Wadna' it be better tae send him tae the bailies?"

"No, Pinkie Cleuch, that will not do at all. If Duke Angus were back again he would tell you to obey me."

"Waesucks! an' I maun do your wull. But remember, leddy,—buy a thief frae the widdie an he'll help hang ye."

"Care na by," she lightly answered.

Silently Pitsligo accompanied the domestics, and soon after the party had entered the spacious hall, Angelica Rowallan descended the broad stairs. She had taken time to put on her simple black alpaca gown, and had thrown over her silvery hair an unpretentious piece of Spanish lace. On her appearance Pitsligo Tysford uncovered his head, and with eyes bent on the ground, stood in humble posture. Angelica gave no sign of recognition, but as she commenced falteringly to speak the man himself came to her relief.

"Pardon me for interrupting you," he said hesitatingly and softly; "but will you favour me by reading aloud this brief paper. It is from the representatives of the present Duke of Kincardine in Edinburgh, and is addressed to the worthy gillie Pinkie Cleuch. But as it concerns me I wish you and all who are gathered here to learn its contents." A servant took the proffered writing and placed it in her hand, and she read:

"These presents are to introduce Pitsligo Tysford, Esq., who to save the good name of Comyn, Duke of Kincardine, arranged to pay off the mortgage on the

Digitized by Google

Eskburgh property. He has ordered that all arrears of wages with interest be promptly paid the servants, and has directed that £10 for each one be added in proof of the esteem in which their loyalty to their young chief is held. He must, therefore, be received at the palace as its possible owner, and the same respect and attention must be shown him as though he were the Duke himself."

When the sweet voice ceased to sound, the stillness that pervaded the hallway could have been equalled only by the quiet reigning in a Highland glen at evening time, or by the terrible and deathlike hush of a prisoner's solitary cell. No one spoke; no one moved. Pitsligo continued in his attitude of lowly deference, and seemed of all those present the one least entitled to rule.

Gradually a look of incredulity, if not of scorn, stole into the eyes of the domestics, and it needed only a leader to start them into violent expressions of revolt. Angelica herself for the moment, could hardly believe her own eyes and ears. How dare this beggar come to her with such a story. Had she not recently sent him a £5 note to aid him in his misfortunes; and whether Dawney or some one else, what piece of farcical acting was this, and what dastardly ends was this evident fraud designed to accomplish? But these and similar thoughts that surged through her mind she kept to herself, and having recovered her composure, she determined to act in accord with the purport of the paper.

"You are welcome, sir," she began, "to this ancient house. You will find it a noble possession. Through the favour of successive Dukes I have been permitted to dwell here whenever it suited my convenience. Here I lived continuously from girlhood to womanhood. I have been all my days a tenant at will. And whenever it suits your pleasure I will vacate my apartments and place them at your disposal. In the meanwhile——"

Pitsligo however did not allow her to finish. With his head yet bowed, and with the subdued manner of one who is entreating a kindness for himself, he answered:

Digitized by Google

"As long, madam, as this famous house shall stand I trust you will remain and make it your home. It is entirely and wholly at your service; and, as for me, I probably shall never rest beneath its roof after this and a few succeeding nights."

"You are considerate, sir," Angelica replied with as much of scorn in her manner as was possible to so meek a soul, "but rest assured I shall not tax your generosity."

Murmurs of discontent, insubordination and anger among the servants had by this time made themselves audible and threatened to develop into violence. But Angelica stayed the outbreak.

"Pinkie Cleuch, remember the Duke's motto on his coat of arms '*Servabo fidem*'—I will keep faith—a watchword we have all been taught to honour, and without questioning do as you have been commanded. Let the servants return to their duties, and speaking for your chief I order you one and all to carry out the letter of your instructions. Pinkie Cleuch, take one of the women and open the old Duke's chamber and prepare a couch for our guest, and set fire a blazing log upon the hearthstone."

"The auld Duke's room, me leddy?"

"Yes, I know what you would say, that this apartment has not been occupied since Duke Angus's death. But where else can we fitly house the gentleman who is sent to us as lord of the palace? He would not wish to intrude on the suite reserved for the present Duke, and as for ghosts he is surely old enough to have outgrown all fear of their influence."

"Aye, madam," modestly interjected Pitsligo who had betrayed no recognition of the servants' hostility, "I am so near by reason of age to becoming a ghost myself that I have no shrinking from my prospective neighbours. But," he continued humbly, "let no one be troubled on my account. I can sleep as well here with my plaid around me as in the most luxurious bed—and even better."

"That may be, sir; but we would not treat the Duke

Digitized by Google

so, and you are to receive from our hands the service we would render him." Turning to the domestics, she added: "Do as I have directed. And bring lights into the great reception room, and food and wine. We have kept this gentleman standing too long already. Hasten!"

The tide was turned and the servants hurried to obey. Pinkie Cleuch, with two great silver candlesticks in his trembling hands, preceded his mistress and Pitsligo from the hall, and refreshments were immediately placed on the table in the reception room. Angelica easily read in the eyes of her guest a feverish desire for the opportunity of conversing with her alone, and as she shared with him in this wish she readily found an excuse for speedily dismissing the attendants. They sat facing each other, some distance apart, as strangers might have done, and neither seemed inclined to break the silence. But, at last, Pitsligo Tysford commenced:

"I thank you, madam, for the kindly note and the assistance you were considerate enough to send me."

"They were both, I suppose, superfluous?"

"The money, yes; but not the letter; gracious words and sweet sympathy I have been so long a stranger to that when they come they are doubly precious and are as a healing balm to hurt wounds."

"I assume that your patron, Pitsligo Tysford, with whom you are travelling and whose papers you have evidently appropriated for the sake of obtaining an entrance into this house, keeps you abundantly supplied with money."

"Pitsligo Tysford—appropriated!—My God! what do you mean? Do you take me for a thief?"

"Are you not Dawney Macgillivray?" she inquired searchingly.

"And what for if I am?" responded the Australian with bitterness; "does that name suggest dishonesty?"

"No; not necessarily so," Angelica stammered while her face flushed, "but you must admit appearances are against you, and how am I to reconcile——"

"Appearances, always appearances," retorted Pitsligo

Digitized by Google

as he rose from his seat and confronted the woman whom he had loved from his youth. He did not raise his voice, and in it could be detected no strident tones as he continued to speak: "Yes, it was appearances that drove me from my home, that made me a fugitive from the justice I had never outraged, that cast a shadow of shame over my young life, and that now dooms me to contempt in my native land. It is no consolation to reflect that I am not the only victim to appearances.

"The failing merchant for the sake of his credit maintains a ruinous style of living; for the sake of appearances many of your fine gentry go to church, though they have lost all confidence in religion; for the sake of appearances politicians uphold party teachings when they have ceased to trust them, and preachers maintain creeds they have outgrown and no longer credit; and for the sake of appearances men lie, practice social hypocrisies, and join in denouncing others truer and better than themselves. Tush, tush, I am only one in many who have been cursed by the tyranny of appearances. But that does not enable me with better grace to endure my lot. Yes; I am Dawney Macgillivray—and yet I am not. The old Dawney, the Dawney you knew, the Dawney whose heart was light, as light as his step on the heather-bed, the Dawney that hated lies, that felt for the oppressed, that stood with the chartists in the stormy days, the Dawney that used to say as proudly as a Duke, what he had learned from a Duke's escutcheon, *Servabo fidem*, that Dawney is dead, drowned, went down in the storm and never can be restored again.

"But there emerged from the sea another Dawney, rather the ghost of a Dawney who had had a new name thrust upon him, a name he could not be freed from, and which was not unwelcome as it served to obliterate the memory of a cruel past. If you ask me who I am—I am Dawney Macgillivray transformed in the deep waters of the Indian Ocean into Pitsligo Tysford, a wanderer and a gatherer. And the other man, my companion yonder is only a dependent, Dick Gowanlock!"

Digitized by Google

These words were uttered earnestly as with the restrained passion of a suffering soul, and yet they were not spoken with anything like dramatic effort. They were unaccompanied by gesture or by such artificial elocutionary modulation of voice as is too common where sincerity is absent. He was master of himself, though agitated; and though grieved, he did not forget that he was in the presence of a lady.

"Well, well, listen, Dawney," answered Angelica, "I believe. But don't you think I have reason to pray you 'help my unbelief.' Here you suddenly reappear lavishing money on palaces you may never care to occupy, and spending it with prodigal hand as though it had no value and no limit. Why, your life has been a wonderful romance——"

"No, no!" Pitsligo responded sadly, "not a romance, but a tragedy; a tragedy of loneliness, of wretchedness, of wearisome and monotonous wandering with the sense of injustice gnawing at my heart strings."

"But only think what God has given you in return for your early misadventures, and how much good He has graciously afforded you the means of accomplishing."

"God!" ejaculated Pitsligo. "Who? Good!—What? Ah me! my faith has pretty much gone both in God and goodness."

"That faith, old friend, must be revived again." And as he dejectedly shook his head, she continued: "Tell me, why did you never correspond with us? We looked long and anxiously for letters from you."

"I wrote to you and Duke Angus by the ship that had rescued me from a watery grave—but no answer reached me. Waiting in South Africa for tidings I set out exploring the land, and in the neighbourhood of what is now known as Kimberly I discovered a plenteous store of precious stones. I did not know then how rich I was—and I did not care: I was dying to hear from home. These diamonds could be of little use to me in Africa, and I could not return here to dispose of them, and so I determined to go when feasible to Australia.

Digitized by Google

But still I waited, waited a year or more. No messages from Scotland came. Twenty years afterwards I heard that the ship had never reached a European port. But of this disaster I was ignorant when, packing my wealth in as small a compass as possible, I sailed for Australia."

"And did you never write again? You knew that we could not communicate with you as we had no idea of your whereabouts."

"Yes—twice to Duke Angus, each time enclosing a letter to yourself—that must have been late in the year 1855 or early in 1856."

"But, then the good Duke was dead. He had passed away more than twelve months earlier, dying suddenly.

"His son Kenneth was with the army in the Crimea, and his father's mail unopened was forwarded to him at the seat of war, and doubtless in the confusion that reigned there it must have been lost. What could you have thought of our silence?"

"What did I think? When weeks grew into months, and months into years and no answer came, I tried to forget every one and everything on this side of the water, even my mother to whom I sent messages through you, and whose silence I construed to mean that she had disowned her suspected boy, and did not care to have anything to do with him. What did I think? I concluded I had been betrayed, that for reasons unintelligible to me, even the Duke wanted to get me out of the way and that I had been made a scapegoat for some one else. Bitterness filled my soul. I had been betrayed. The sight of men and women became intolerable to me. I sought the wilderness, but wherever I went, however far from civilization, my wealth increased.

"With money obtained in exchange for diamonds I purchased lands, lands, lands—in South Australia lands, in West Australia lands, in New Zealand—lands until I owned principalities in acreage and my flocks became the wonder of the people. Everything I touched turned to gold; and as though that were not enough, at a certain lonely spot away from the haunts of men I found

Digitized by Google

gold deposits so rich and so easy to obtain that their value transcends my powers of computation. Could I have tabulated my possessions how the world would have envied! Had I cared to display my wealth how easily I could have outshone princes! But my money mocked me. I cared not for it; I had no use for it—I had been betrayed! The years rolled on, and notwithstanding my positive dislike of affluence it still grew and grew, until I am now bewildered when I stop to consider its almost boundless proportions."

"And what in all these vicissitudes have you thought of me?"

Pitsligo's voice trembled and he answered with less distinctness: "You! I loved you!"

"But did you not suspect that I had joined in a conspiracy against you?"

"I hoped—against hope: I loved you. I could not really doubt for I truly loved."

"And did not the skean dhu I placed in your hands suggest a clew?"

"No; and I lost it before I inspected it, lost it in a street brawl soon after landing in London."

"And now that you have returned, Dawney, I suppose you have come to seek vengeance on the survivors of those who wronged you, and possibly in redeeming this estate you are beginning by making rank realize the supremacy of money!"

Pitsligo's face assumed a troubled look. Always serious, the seriousness increased to painful melancholy. He moved about the room restlessly, and returning to the side of Angelica he leaned heavily on the back of her chair and resumed:

"I do not think I am vindictive. The present Duke has never sinned against me—why should I retaliate on him? And as for his grandfather, I can hardly imagine that he could intentionally, and in cold blood do a dishonourable thing. Still I wish I could understand more about the betrayal—what it was for and for whose safety!"

Digitized by Google

"I thank you, Dawney, for this Christian spirit——"

"It is not Christian. I'm not a Christian. Were I one I fear I should not now be renting the Duke's London house so as to aid him without offending his dignity, and I should not be paying mortgages with the ultimate intention of restoring the ancient glories of his family. No, I am not a Christian—I'm only a worn old man in whom something of the ancient clansman's spirit survives."

"And you will do this?"

"Why not—money is of no value to me!"

"It may perhaps come to you, Dawney, as a heavenly benediction on your unselfish intentions to know that Duke Angus cared for your mother tenderly until the day of his death. He brought her from North St. James Street and settled her here in the palace. To her he was a brother, thoughtful, gracious, and when some of her strange moods came on her he was always patient, sympathetic. She outlived him by five years, and at length she breathed her last in my arms."

Reverently and solemnly Pitsligo murmured: "I am grateful to Duke Angus, and if I can honour his memory by preserving in honour his house I will do so. But what of my sister, what of Zinnia?"

"The good old Duke likewise was mindful of your sister. No father could have watched over her with more affection and jealous care. Here she was educated, and he provided that she should live here until her marriage. After his death she enjoyed the parental provision he had made for her, and she married over twenty years ago."

"Married!" exclaimed Pitsligo, as though something new and unparalleled in the annals of mankind had then taken place. "Married! to whom? Has she any children? Is she living?"

For the first time he became really nervous and tremblingly excited; but his emotion caused Angelica embarrassment. Her tongue faltered and her eyes were restless, and she moved uneasily in her chair. The

Digitized by Google

change in her manner did not escape the keen gaze of Tysford, and he inquired almost sharply:

"What is the matter, is she yet alive?"

"I trust so—but——"

At that moment the door of the anteroom was thrown open without ceremony, and the venerable gillie stood in the entrance, candlestick in hand. "Hush!" whispered Angelica to her guest, "go, rest in peace. I will tell you all to-morrow." Then turning to the gillie she said:

"Pinkie Cleuch, conduct Mr. Tysford to his chamber. See that he has everything needful for his comfort, and be sure that he has no reason to complain of Scottish hospitality. Good-night."

"Good-night!" responded Pitsligo relapsing into his ordinary state of submissiveness. He slowly followed the old limping gillie, his head bowed and his manner expressive of the deep gratitude he felt at being so courteously attended. Before he began to ascend the massive stairway he paused in the hall a moment and looked back. Angelica was still standing statuesque in her poor black dress. Her eyes were moistened with tears, and shadows shrouded her pale face in gloom.

Digitized by Google

XIV

MIDNIGHT SHADOWS AND WHAT CAME OF THEM

PITSLIGO TYSFORD found himself in a large and picturesque baronial chamber. The floor was oak, once doubtless polished, but now rough and dull; and here and there it was partly covered by the skins of mountain deer. Wainscoting, handsomely carved, lined the lower portion of the walls, and the ceiling also consisted of wood, great rafters sloping and upholding an interior timber roof.

A few ancestral portraits, and several likenesses of leaders in the Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745—the Earl of Marr, the Marquis of Tullibardin, the Macdonald of Clanronald, young Lochiel, Cluny MacPherson, and the Pretender himself—adorned the room, and with pictures of the Battle of Prestonpans and of Culloden, and of the triumphal march of the Prince into Edinburgh, imparted to it a romantic and melancholy charm.

The collection of arms, ancient and modern, with a time-worn standard of the ancient family of Kincardine, and a tattered battle-flag marked "Waterloo," recalled the fact that Duke Angus had fought for king and country on that famous field, and added to its impressive dignity.

One complete suit of armour bore the proud label "Bannockburn," and other specimens of mail, both chain and coat, were distributed about the apartment. Near the doors and over the deep mullioned windows were collected and grouped helmets, battle-axes, partisans, maces, claymores, dirks and old-fashioned firearms. Close to the huge chimney, where on the hearth beneath logs blazed, sputtered and sizzled, and attached to the oaken panelling, there was a particularly striking cluster of arms. The poles of two Lochaber axes had been

Digitized by Google

passed through the armholes of a dinted breastplate and afforded it precarious support. The breastplate was surmounted by an old Highland ox-hide target, behind which were crossed a couple of broadswords, while the circle of the buckler was grimly decorated with an assortment of dirks and pistols. The shield and weapons were fastened to a wooden frame, and the frame was hung by a bit of frayed silken cord to the wall just between the gleaming heads of the Lochaber axes. It was suspended in such a way as to be easily removed, and exposed as it was to the heat of the roaring fire it was remarkable that the cord had not already yielded.

The furnishing of the chamber was completed by a capacious and stately bed near the fireplace and opposite the suspended target, and by several antique chairs and tables of rich and exquisite workmanship. It was such a resting-place as would have befitted a knightly Tancrid or an Ivanhoe, and would have offered an appropriate refuge to a battle-spent warrior from Falkirk's fatal field. But there was little if anything in its trappings and appointments that accorded with the appearance of its present occupant.

The wood crackled and flamed upon the hearth, and long after all others in the house had retired to sleep, Pitsligo sat and meditated. "What should he do then? Aye, what?" He was depressed, disquieted. The flame-light from the logs and the flaring light from the candles interblended and cast fantastic and wavering forms of darkness around the chamber. Shadows multiplied. They gathered in distant corners and recesses, they hung uneasily around the mail-clad effigies of gallant warriors, they flitted ominously about the canopied bed; and the moaning of the late November wind without broke on the stillness within as the wailing voice of shadows.

Pitsligo shivered by the fire, and involuntarily his eyes searched the gloom for something, some one—he knew not what or whom. He was not afraid, but he was lonely, more lonely than he had ever felt during his most solitary hours in the bush. Again he shivered and was

Digitized by Google

conscious of a growing languor and drowsiness. He strove to resist the painful sluggishness fast deepening into lethargy. And then he turned a longing and questioning look towards the inviting bed; and, with eyelids almost too heavy for wakefulness, he tried to gaze upon the skins covering the floor and wooing to repose, as though debating which to choose. His vision grew misty, his head nodded and jerked downward, and he murmured faintly in his beard: "And what shall I do then?" But just at the very moment when he was sinking into oblivion his sight was wonderfully restored, and though his body continued lumpish, listless and numb, he saw; and this is what he saw:

A freakish and wayward shadow, which had already fascinated him by its weird and elfish tremulous undulations and gyrations, came to a sudden pause, and for a while was motionless. After a brief respite from its restless convolutions, it quivered and shook, and from its tenuous and misty womb there emerged a form as unsubstantial as itself but distinct in shape and outline.

The figure was nebulous and pallid and was arrayed in Highland garb, colourless and lustreless. While it wore the feileadh kilt, was encircled by a plaid ornamented with a massive brooch, and was crowned with the plumed sombre head gear of the Black Watch, the costume was utterly without hue or tint and was as white as snow. From beneath the soldier's feathery helmet the face, pale, expressionless, was visible. The eyes were fixed and staring, and glistened with the lambent lustre of the pearl. Their subdued light was the only relief from the otherwise ashen, chalky and ghastly complexion of the preternatural presence. The figure glided with soundless steps towards Pitsligo Tysford, and stood in full view of the agitated watcher.

It was impossible for him to rise, to speak, or even to raise his arms. He was held fast to his seat by the marvellous spell that wonder, awe, not unmixed with horror, cast upon him, and he could only gaze. For a few seconds, to Pitsligo an eternity, the phantom lingered by

Digitized by Google

his chair, and then moved silently, and moved while yet motionless, to the other side of the chamber, near the fireplace, and the flickering blaze from the hearth gleamed faintly through its diaphanous whiteness. It turned with measured slowness and dignity and confronted the picturesquely assorted weapons secured to the wainscoting, and, uplifting a fleshless hand, down came Lochaber axes, breastplate, target, swords and pistols in a heap, and with a clash and crash so loud and strident that Pitsligo was shaken out of his paralyzing stupefaction and sprang from his seat.

He started forward impulsively to lay hold on his phantom visitor, but the form had changed again into an idle shadow thrown by the fitful flame of expiring logs on the oaken floor.

"Duke Angus himself," whispered Pitsligo, "Duke Angus as I saw him when I was a boy on that brave day when he greeted in the park the veterans of the Black Watch who had served under him at Waterloo. Duke Angus—or was I asleep and did I dream? Dream! but the downfall of this collection of arms and armour was no dream, and it made noise enough to startle the dead."

And Pitsligo listened, expecting that the gillies would in wild alarm be speedily knocking at his door. He listened but not a sound, not even the baying of a hound, disturbed the stillness of the night. On the fire he threw more wood, replaced the dying candles with fresh ones, and consulting his chronometer watch, discovered to his surprise that it was nearing the morning hour. He felt chilly and huddled closer to the cheery blaze.

"Yes;" talking to himself, he said, "I must have been asleep. But how real, how very real! And then how came the disaster, this wrack and ruin, the reality of which is beyond denial?"

Impelled by his own question, he rose from where he had been crouching on the floor that he might be comforted and refreshed by the warmth, and, picking his way through the scattered weapons, sought out the cause of the mishap. It was easily discovered. The silken cord,

Digitized by Google

already worn, and probably affected by the unusual heat to which it had that evening been exposed, had given way and the entire fanciful fabric had crashed to the ground. There was nothing supernatural in this. But as Pitsligo continued to scrutinize the wainscoting to which the target had been attached, he was interested to find a secret panel, the frame of which had been so warped and shrunken by time as to betray its existence.

He was not an inquisitive man, and had never been accustomed to pry into the affairs of other people; but he would have been either less or more than human, if in existing circumstances he had failed to ascertain what this recess concealed. The first object his hand touched was a small bag of gold, which, with a contemptuous and impatient gesture, he thrust back again. A casket of jewels next rewarded his search, and with the treasure a bit of writing which appealed to his tender nature: "Last worn by a Duchess of Kincardine at the ball given by Prince Charles Edward Stuart at Holyrood Palace. Never to be worn again." And added by a different and more recent pen, "To Angelica and Zinnia for a wedding dower."

Pitsligo closed the lid of the box with a sigh, and replaced it with all the solemnity of veneration. In doing so his fingers came in contact with a small package, bound to which was what seemed to be a deadly weapon. When exposed to the light it turned out to be a number of memoranda tied together, and with them securely attached the empty sheath of a skean dhu.

Pitsligo would have restored the papers at once to their hiding-place had it not been that he recognized on the scabbard a crest identical with one inwrought in the corner of the handkerchief he had carried about with him as love's memorial for many years. By the swift association of ideas the empty sheath recalled a sheathless weapon that had been placed in his keeping when he received the handkerchief. As it was, he paused and examined more closely the package; and as he did so he was taken back to discover that it was labelled "Con-

Digitized by Google

cerning Dawney Macgillivray." His hand trembled and a sickening sensation seized him. He tottered across the chamber to his chair, clutching the unexpected prize, and for a few minutes sat irresolute.

Recovering his equanimity he trimmed the candles afresh, and concluded that as the papers concerned him he would not be acting dishonourably if he read them. The first he opened held within its folds a worn time-stained bank note. The others consisted of letters from Kenneth, the son of Duke Angus and memoranda of communications sent by the Duke to Kenneth. Pitsligo on going over the correspondence made out that from the first the Duke had suspected the young Master of Rowallan of committing the robbery on the premises of Sir Murchison Carfrae, and that, though Powrie had indignantly denied the accusation, an accumulation of evidence had confirmed these suspicions. The finding of the skean dhu the day after the robbery, which matched exactly the sheath which was discovered in the chamber of Powrie; also, the fact that the skeleton key which had been used by the culprit had turned out to be one of a bunch which were kept at the palace to open doors when the real keys had been lost, were damaging proofs; and then there could be no doubt but that the cloak left behind in hurried flight was his.

Pitsligo also ascertained from the correspondence that through the courtesy of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh there had been intrusted to his Grace for a season the articles—the key, the bank-note, and the cloak—which were to be returned to the authorities, but which doubtless, owing to the Duke's death, had never been restored.

It was likewise further developed that his Grace refrained from exposing the guilty one as he shrank from the ordeal and from the inevitable shame that would attach to the name of his honoured friend, long since dead, whose children he had pledged himself to treat as his own. In his perplexity he had planned the escape of Dawney Macgillivray, and had purposed to compensate the youth as best he might, while labouring, without

Digitized by Google

sacrificing the Rowallans, to find a way of ultimately establishing Dawney's innocence. He had not intended to wrong the young man and had cherished the hope of vindicating his character in due course of time and seeing him the happy husband of Angelica. Later letters revealed his grief and solicitude at the protracted and inexplicable silence of the fugitive, and contained fervent exhortations to his son that should he be taken away, the welfare of Widow Macgillivray and her daughter might receive his watchful care.

Kenneth's responses were full of undisguised horror at the vicious courses of Powrie Rowallan, of promises to succour and shield those who had been wronged and contained fiery intimations that should Dawney return he would see him righted if all the Rowallans in the universe had to be consigned to infamy.

When Pitsligo had completed the careful perusal of the papers he sat motionless and soliloquized:

"And what shall I do now? Vindicate Dawney Macgillivray? But what good will it do him? He has been a long while dead. And then, Duke Angus? Would it not bring upon his memory a reproach? Well, suppose it does? has he not in guarding the name of those dear to him sacrificed the reputation of a worthy family?

"Why should the lowly be disgraced for the sake of the high-born? The Duke himself was not satisfied with his own conduct. He sacrifices Dawney to Powrie, and his conscience condemns him, and he dies while seeking to expiate his mischievous error. Ready to make an atonement by gifts and kindness, to the last he fails to realize that where simple justice is withheld atonements are impossible. But he deserves credit for his good intentions? True; and I will see that his descendants are compensated for all that was generous and considerate in his dealings with the mother and sister of Dawney Macgillivray. I will save the old house of Kincardine from bankruptcy, and that will sufficiently balance the books so far as kindness and

Digitized by Google

benefits conferred are concerned! But Dawney's name —my name—that must be cleared from stain of every kind. I owe it to myself, to my father—ah me! and to my mother and my sister—to my sister if she be alive and to her offspring. The proofs I have in my possession and they will suffice to bring my rehabilitation to a speedy issue.

"This must be my first care. The Master of Rowallan shall be made to pay the penalty of his crime. It cannot be difficult to find him: perhaps that was he himself who accompanied Angelica to the train. Angelica! what must she suffer, must she be dragged into this foul and shameful business? Cannot she be spared? And yet may she not have sacrificed me for her brother; and if so, why should she not be sacrificed for my sister? Could she have known, could she have guessed? and could she have been simulating tender affection as we were parting on that fateful night?

"But who are you, Dawney Macgillivray, who are you, Pitsligo Tysford, that you should judge her? You are old and life is far spent, you have loved her, and deep down in your soul you may even love her still, if not for what she really is, for what you have imagined her to be. Can you, old man, bring pain and anguish on the one being who has been, though absent from you, your constant companion and comrade in all your wanderings? Suppose she in her distraction failed you in the hour of need, does that warrant you in forgetting that for fifty years the very thought of her has reconciled you to what would otherwise have been an insupportable existence? To you, Dawney Macgillivray, her happiness must be sacred. True, true, and yet the guilty must be exposed; but how? How punish the criminal and not afflict and shame the innocent? Think, man, think, and think again."

He rose from his chair, drew aside the heavy draperies of the windows and looked out on the new-born day. The sun had risen with a tender glory, and had touched the withering grass and leaves with a soft shimmering

Digitized by Google

light, while dewdrops sparkled and gleamed in pendulous beauty on bare trees and faded flowers. In the luminous splendour of the morning the poor candles flickered and blinked, mutely praying to be extinguished, as they had no heart to keep up the mockery of shining in a presence whose effulgence eclipses every other. Pitsligo appeared to hear the mute supplication and he snuffed out the tapers. Then it occurred to him that he ought not to permit the betrayal of the Duke's secret panel. Angelica ought to know, but not the domestics. Therefore, he carefully adjusted the little sliding door to its frame, tied the broken cord, restored the target and swords to their place on the wall, and completed his task by arranging breastplate and Lochaber axes as they were before the crash.

When he had finished this work he went to the writing-table and penned several letters; one to Mr. Pinchover, another to Orlop Youtsay, another to his bankers, and another to his waiting-man, Dick Gowanlock. The ink was scarcely dry on the last communication when he was interrupted by Pinkie Cleuch, who had come to call him from his slumber and learn his pleasure. To the gillie he was meekness itself, and declining offers of black cock, mince collops and other savoury dishes, which the larder hardly could have furnished, he requested a cog of porridge and a sup of milk, and in addition asked that his letters be mailed, and that a gig or coach of some kind should be sent with a note to Edinburgh that his servant might join him immediately at Eskburgh.

Modest and simple as these wishes were they made a curious impression on the mind of Pinkie Cleuch. The idea of a rich man being satisfied with oatmeal! That might be complimentary to Scotland, but it was not consistent with the tastes of the wealthy. This self-depreciation and this politeness to humble folk, like himself, could only go to show that there was something wrong,—that this visitor, who had not known enough to go to bed, must be an impostor who had so poorly learned his part that he did not give himself the airs of the noble.

Digitized by Google

Then, to think of his having a valet! What kind of creature could he be? "An' if the maister was sae duddie an' sae shochling, I wunner if the scallag is no a puir klippert, a gowk wi' never a sark or trews tae hide his nakedness!"

Digitized by Google

XV

A MORNING WITH GATHERING CLOUDS

ON the conclusion of his meagre morning meal, and after an hour or more spent in meditation, Pitsligo descended to the room below, and there found Angelica already waiting.

"I have come," he said, without spending much time on preliminary salutations, "to inform you that I have at last discovered the perpetrator of the robbery for which I have suffered so unjustly."

"I am glad," Angelica answered, "for your sake; but I do not see how you could have been enlightened within these walls!"

"Are you really glad?"

"Yes."

"Then you do not know, you do not suspect?" He looked at her as though he would penetrate her innermost soul and divine her most secret thoughts.

"Do you remember," he resumed, "the skean dhu you gave me as I left my native land?"

"Yes; I referred to it yesterday."

"So you did. And you mean to say that you never knew to whom it belonged, and that you never entertained a suspicion ——?"

"I never knew," Angelica replied, "but, God forgive me, I have sometimes feared."

"Well; I have found the owner!"

"You have! And his name?"

"Powrie, the Master of Rowallan."

"My brother!"

"Yes—your brother."

"And *your* brother, too," Angelica responded significantly and swiftly.

Digitized by Google

"Mine! you mock me! Ah! I suppose you mean that he is my brother in the Christian sense, in the sense in which rival popes and wrangling bishops, and warring Protestants, with their inquisitions, racks, thumbscrews and cruel misrepresentations, are brothers. No; I am not in the fold. I am only a poor sheep in the wilderness, far away from the wolves which in the name of brotherhood rend one another. He is no brother of mine. He is my enemy. He has blackened my name, cursed my life, and now that I have stumbled on the evidences of his guilt carefully prepared and arranged by good Duke Angus I cannot escape the conviction that I ought and must confront him with his misdeeds before the tribunal of justice." These words were not spoken fiercely or loudly, but deliberately, as though the speaker were slowly groping his way to a position from which there could be no retreat.

"And yet," Angelica rejoined, "you will do no such thing, Dawney Macgillivray. There was a time when for my sake you would have surrendered more than you would now lose by dismissing all thoughts of revenge from your soul. But we are not as we were. We are both old"—and her voice trembled—"and I have no claims on you. Disgrace me as well as Powrie if you will; but before you go too far, remember, I reiterate it, he is your brother; for he is the husband of your sister, Zinnia, and the father of her child, and you will assuredly spare them from the infamy you would bring to the house of Rowallan!"

"What, he the husband of my Zinnia and she a mother! He the thief, the liar, the——" Pitsligo could for the moment go no farther. His speech failed him. He trembled; he gathered the coarse hair of his beard in his mouth and gnawed it, and he folded his arms tightly over his breast as though to hold himself in restraint. There were tears in his eyes and a sob in his throat. He soon, however, roused himself, but as he was about to speak, and apparently with wrath, he paused again, and memory recalled a sweet child's face

Digitized by Google

framed in a glory of sun-kissed yellow locks, and that face soothed and quieted him and restored him to his nobler and gentler self.

"You are right, Angelica, I cannot shame an honoured name; I cannot bring wretchedness on the innocent. Oh! that these villains could suffer alone, and not involve the blameless in the retributive consequences of their crimes. Powrie is spared that others who shared not his fault may be spared as well."

"Ah! Dawney, God will reward and comfort you for this forgiving spirit."

The old man turned sadly and wearily to the woman at his side, and answered:

"I do not forgive; I only forego. I do not pardon him, I only pity others. Dawney Macgillivray was sacrificed for the guilty years ago, and now Dawney Macgillivray must sacrifice himself for the innocent. So be it. Let Dawney make the sacrifice complete, and let him for good and all be lost to the memory of men."

"God will surely reward you, Dawney, for your unselfishness and magnanimity."

"Hush, Angelica," he replied, "I am not thinking of God at all, and He has not thought of me, and as for Dawney Macgillivray I do not wish us to think of him any more. I am Pitsligo Tysford, a wanderer and a gatherer. The name is legally mine by right of long identity with it, and I desire to be known by none other and you must call me by none other. You alone know my secret, and I am certain you are not the woman to blazon it abroad."

"Then we begin an acquaintanceship now, and do not renew one of long standing?" she inquired with something approaching disappointment in the tones of her voice.

"Yes," he answered, "it is better so; and yet who knows but that the new may yield greater peace and happiness than the old. Be that as it may, we have just been introduced to each other, and you are the Mistress of Rowallan and I am plain Pitsligo Tysford."

Digitized by Google

"And not even Angelica?" she asked softly.

The old man responded pathetically, tenderly and almost inaudibly: "I loved one Angelica half a hundred years ago, and I have never ceased to love her, and henceforth let me preserve that name to the angel of my memory. Should I find her again, I should like her to know that I have been loyal even to her name, and never gave it to another, except for a brief hour to one whose gentleness reminded me of herself."

Angelica was deeply affected by his pensive mood and by his infatuation with an image he had from youth enshrined in his heart, and she whispered:

"So be it; I am henceforward to you the Mistress of Rowallan, and you are only to me Mr. Pitsligo Tysford. Thus we bury the past; and yet can we fairly dismiss it without your knowing of the fortunes and misfortunes of your sister?"

"True, I had forgotten"—and he stopped short, confused, as though he were condemning himself for thinking too much of another woman when his every thought ought to have been given to Zinnia. Angelica readily interpreted what was passing in his mind and generously came to his relief.

"Do not distress yourself," she said, "you have done nothing wrong in determining first of all the footing on which we are to stand in the future; but that being settled you may well give heed to all that I can relate of your sister's story."

"I pray you, good Mistress of Rowallan, proceed, I am devoured by painful anxiety to learn everything you can tell me concerning Zinnia. What of her? Say on."

Simultaneously the two old people drew their chairs closer together, Pitsligo leaned forward to listen, and she placed her hand on his arm as she spoke.

"I must go back to the night of your escape, and solemnly aver that what I told you then was absolutely all I knew of the Duke's plans and reasons for his determination to get you out of the country. I did not deceive you."

Digitized by Google

"Thank God for that," the old man murmured.

"As a girl I was forbidden to inquire, and was too inexperienced for any one to confide in me. Yet a strange misgiving haunted me, which I tried to put away from me. What that misgiving was you have discovered in ascertaining who it was that plundered Captain Carfrae of the money, part of which he had probably won from the robber himself. Now, in presence of this evidence, some things become plain that hitherto have been mysterious,—the rupture between Duke Angus and Powrie, the bad blood between my brother and the Duke's son, Kenneth, and the absence of my brother from Eskburgh for upwards of fifteen years.

"I have only vague information as to his whereabouts and his doings during that entire period. He seems to have pursued his medical studies in London, afterwards he was with the army in the Crimea, where he and Kenneth had more than one violent altercation, and then he went to India from whence he wrote me occasionally, usually for money. While I knew nothing of his habits, yet from these appeals and from his reckless courses when a youth, I drew conclusions unfavourable to the blamelessness of his conduct. About twenty years ago suddenly and unannounced he reappeared in Edinburgh."

"Returned like the prodigal, I suppose," interjected Pitsligo, "in rags and tatters and prepared to confess his sin if he could only be assured that the best robes in the house would be put upon him."

"Far from it," continued Angelica; "he was well clothed, was well supplied with money, and both in his appointments and manners seemed to be every inch a gentleman. The loans I had advanced were scrupulously paid; he was open-handed with every one, and in a little while was as popular in Edinburgh and Eskburgh as he had been in his early manhood. He informed me that he was living in Buenos Ayres and talked a great deal about his wealthy and distinguished friends, if I remember right, the Urquizas and one Professor Avecomus. When I sought specific details of his career and of his prospects he

Digitized by Google

always evaded committing himself, and diverted me from the subject by some witty sally or some bit of picturesque description.

"He had not been long with us when it became apparent that he was fascinated by your sister. Her society he sought, lingered with her whenever he had a chance, and would hardly go anywhere unless she accompanied him. It was soon manifest that she reciprocated his love, or was bewitched by his magnetic or hypnotic powers."

"Alas! poor Zinnia," murmured Pitsligo, "and was there no one to warn you?"

"Yes; I warned her, though he was my own brother. I told her of his youthful escapades, of his mercurial temperament and wayward disposition. Remonstrance was of no avail. They were married. Immediately after the ceremony they set out for South America. Several letters reached me from Powrie and Zinnia filled with glowing accounts of their prosperity and happiness, and one announced the glad tidings that in a few weeks your sister expected to be a mother. That was the last communication I received. I wrote and wrote and wrote again, but no messages came in reply. It seemed as though they had dropped out of existence, had been swallowed up by an earthquake, or had been engulfed in the sea.

"In addressing the authorities I was favoured with a curt official communication which assured me that my brother had not been found guilty of complicity in certain crimes committed by one Jorge Avecomus and had been discharged from prison, and that he and his family had disappeared from Buenos Ayres and had gone to parts unknown. I could do no more—I could only wait, and wait I did, learning nothing in the meanwhile, until about two years ago when Powrie returned to this country and sought me out in London."

"And what did he do then?"

"Why, he told a wild, inconsistent story of his misfortunes, and asserted that his wife had abandoned him for another man, Captain Raeburn Carfrae."

Digitized by Google

"What!" exclaimed Pitsligo, "that was the name of the officer whose money was stolen on the dark night when my honour and my happiness were wrecked."

"The same. Powrie blamed him and cursed him as the author of his disgrace and wretchedness. He declared that it was solely on his account that he had abandoned his home in Buenos Ayres and had returned to India where he had tried to forget his shame by giving himself up to the study of occult phenomena, in support of which statement he appealed to his Indian servant, Naoroji, who I think would ruin his soul to please his master."

"And what did you say then?"

"Say? I told him that I would not and could not believe anything infamous of Zinnia Macgillivray, that I had watched over her, had seen her grow up and knew the spotless purity of her soul. I told him that nothing he might say would convince me that she could forget her womanhood, or act in such way as to bring a blush to her own cheek or indignation to the heart of an honest man."

"Thank you Angel——, I mean Mistress of Rowallan, thanks for your noble defense and unwavering loyalty. And what did he do then?"

"Why, he raved like one demented, and when a lull in his ungovernable fury occurred, and I entreated him to be more specific, and to inform me of the whereabouts and fate of Zinnia and her child, he would not listen to me, and no persuasions since that first stormy interview have been able to overcome his determination not to say more. I am, therefore, in the dark as much as you are concerning the retreat and condition of your sister and her daughter—for I did manage to extract from Powrie the acknowledgment that the child was a girl."

"And," inquired Pitsligo with a painful tremour in his voice, "have you taken no steps independent of him to ascertain what has become of these helpless and wronged souls?"

"Yes; in this respect I failed not to do everything in my power; but unhappily without success. I have kept

Digitized by Google

up the search incessantly, but without avail; and if in the months gone by my unconscious self, or my subconscious self, directed your pencil to trace in my handwriting the words I read on the paper you had guarded in the little Bible, the act was the result of my anguish on account of the uncertainties attending the fate of those dear to you and to me. Their possible suffering brought back again the form of Dawney Macgillivray, who—as you say—was drowned in the Indian Ocean, and whom I had never forgotten, and for whose return I had often prayed in the far off time before hope had altogether died.

"Is it unnatural, then, though inexplicable, that in my extremity, an extremity darkened even by other fears and perplexities, I should, though unknown to myself, appeal to him who had never failed me in my girlhood, calling on him to come back as I needed him? I do not understand it; the mystery is dark to me. Perhaps God kept you in the wilderness until the time had arrived for you to come forth for the righting of the wrongs of others; and when I had become sufficiently unselfish passionately to long for their sakes more than for my own that you should return He wondrously transmitted my yearning in such a way as to arrest attention and bring you back."

With a sad smile lighting his rugged face, the old man replied: "You will persist in seeing God in everything."

Quickly she responded: "In everything good, or that makes for righteousness. And knowing Him to be the God of justice I am more than ever burdened with a weight of anxiety when I think of the dark ways which I fear Powrie is now treading."

"What do you mean?"

"I hardly know just what I mean. But, listen, and judge yourself. My brother two years ago was poor and discredited. Now he seems to be rich. He resides in a magnificent mansion and is surrounded with every luxury. In explanation of this remarkable transition he only talks vaguely about some ventures having turned out well; but I have seen his name in connection with a scheme for enriching the artisan classes and I have my

Digitized by Google

misgivings. I asked him about this great business philanthropy and he replied lightly that he had gone into it only to help his young friend the present Duke of Kincardine; but I suspect that he attached himself to Comyn and appealed to him by the old time friendship between the families, and then used his name to attract capitalists and others to further his enterprise; and as the young man has never inquired into the history of the events in which Dawney was concerned, and as no one has had any good reason for enlightening him, he probably lent himself quite innocently to what I apprehend may turn out to be a wholesale imposition."

"Are you talking about 'The Emancipator Mining and Building Co., Limited'?" inquired Pitsligo.

"Yes.

"After Zinnia left me, and I felt lonely, I came to take an interest in the ever growing class of girl wage-earners. I discovered that they were infamously underpaid and were often driven into social iniquity by starvation, and were subject to nameless insults by foremen and even by employers. To their betterment I determined to devote myself, and to this end organized a movement in Edinburgh and afterwards in Glasgow. As the work extended I saw the importance of making it national, and consequently, while continuing in connection with it here, I carried the headquarters to London, where for the larger part of the year I reside. You can easily understand that in my position many young women come to me for advice; and one day the printed prospectus of this 'Emancipator Co.' was brought to me by a frugal shop girl, who had at great sacrifice saved up two or three pounds and who desired to know whether I thought it would be wise for her to invest in this magnificent benevolent corporation.

"God knows I am not wise and lose myself continually in the ways of this world; but when I read a certain name, not all the notables mentioned as sanctioning the scheme could convince me that it was not designed ultimately to rob the industrious poor. Can you imagine

Digitized by Google

the despair into which this impression plunged me? Taken together with all I was suffering on account of Zinnia and her child, I was beside myself. My brain whirled; I thought my heart would burst; and for a few days, like St. Paul, I hardly knew whether I was in the body or out of it. But God wafted my message across the seas and I am grateful; for it has proven that my confidence in Dawney Macgillivray was not misplaced."

"Stop, stop, Mistress of Rowallan," Pitsligo earnestly remonstrated, "remember our agreement. If you go on talking in this wild way the entire household will learn that my family name is not Tysford."

This warning had scarcely been uttered when a movement in the hall, as of stealthy retreating footsteps, arrested the attention of the speaker and his companion. Angelica rose hurriedly and pushed open the door of the chamber which carelessly had been left ajar, and searched, but all in vain, for the intruder. The hall was empty. Had she been only a trifle more prompt she would have detected Dick Gowanlock in ignominious flight.

That military worthy had arrived just a little while before from Edinburgh, and seeking his master, had been deterred from entering the room by the sound of voices. As he stood guard, imagining himself a kind of celestial Tyler protecting the entrance of some sacred asylum, he heard several things that amazed him, particularly that his extraordinary chief was not in reality what he gave himself out to be. This discovery well-nigh paralyzed him; for it abruptly brought to an end all the glowing hopes that he and his better-half had been building on the supposition that this ragged millionaire would turn out to be their long lost and much lamented relative. Ready to faint, he had almost betrayed himself by a soldierly ejaculation, when the instinct of fear seized him and he hastened as noiselessly as possible from the scene.

When Angelica had satisfied herself that she had been mistaken and that she had only been tricked by her nervous fancy, she returned, jealously closing the door behind her.

Digitized by Google

The old friends talked long together and as a result a definite line of action was adopted. During the afternoon Angelica wrote her brother that an eccentric gentleman, Mr. Tysford, was seeking the legitimate heirs of the deceased Dawney Macgillivray, who had not been drowned as was supposed, but had lived long enough to amass an enormous fortune, and had bequeathed a million sterling to Zinnia, if living, or to her children, if dead. This trust had been committed to Mr. Tysford, who was now seeking honourably to discharge the same. He had come to Edinburgh to inquire about Zinnia, and to meet other obligations. There he had sought the writer out and she had told him what she knew of Zinnia's story. He then declared he would have nothing to do with her if she was such a character as described; but that he must secure the inheritance through the father to the daughter. Angelica went on to write that she was perplexed and knew not how to act; but had thought best to submit the facts to her brother. What would he advise? Could he and would he reveal the retreat of the mother and child, and thus be instrumental in providing for their future well-being?

The same mail that carried this letter to London bore another from the pen of Dick Gowanlock which was designed to end the dreams indulged by his beloved spouse. Three days passed before answers were received to either; and in the meanwhile it was evident that Pitsligo Tysford was slowly undergoing a singular transformation at the hands of the Mistress of Rowallan.

She had not, however, become to him his Angelica. He yet clung tenderly and tenaciously to the image of his beloved as he had known her in his youth, and which half a century had idealized into an unearthly loveliness. He was not obdurate, however, to the quiet saintly ways, the musical speech, and the persuasive influence of his companion. She rallied him on the uncouthness of his appearance; she smilingly rebuked him for his hypocrisy in concealing his wealth by dressing like a beggar, and she mischievously inquired, as her old eyes glinted, how

Digitized by Google

he could expect a lady as well-gowned as herself—alas! for the poor faded dress!—to be seen with him on the streets of Eskburgh or to journey back with him to London.

Pitsligo said little in reply. He was meek and subdued, and shook his head sorrowfully, but though he resisted in his awkward manner, the woman was too much for him. She had her way at last. The barber came and broke several combs in disentangling the wilderness of hair. Disordered nature finally succumbed to art. The wretched shock was unmatted and trimmed, and the beard was reduced to something like civilized order and proportions. Shoemakers, haberdashers and tailors also appeared in succession on the scene, bringing with them samples of their various wares. A modest wardrobe was gradually chosen, colour and style being determined by Angelica herself. She selected everything, and kept her victim and his man-servant busy retiring and trying on the different articles of clothing that appealed to her taste.

Pitsligo went through it all with the air of a martyr, obeying sluggishly and as one who would like to rebel if he had only dared to do so. When the fair tyrant was through with him the total effect ought to have mollified his feelings.

As he stood before her in his dark well-fitting tweed suit, with honest shoes on his feet, with a good gray plaid round his shoulders, and with a new Tam O' Shanter Scotch bonnet on his head—for to her credit be it recorded she had not insulted his simple dignity by crowning him with an unsightly silken English tile—he was not unworthy of respectful admiration. As Angelica contemplated the work of her hands, arranged the folds of his plaid herself, and looked as though she were tempted to kiss him, she merrily exclaimed: "There, you are clothed and I trust in your right mind, and I now turn you over to the valet hoping that he will keep you in good order."

Pitsligo was not altogether impervious to the humour

Digitized by Google

of the situation, and mockingly pretended he had fallen in love with himself in his new attire. At the same time he had his revenge in his own harmless fashion.

He outraged Angelica's Scotch thriftiness by paying the tradesmen who supplied his wardrobe far more than they asked; and he further horrified her by ordering through one of the merchants she had herself introduced the most expensive dresses and fur wraps Edinburgh could produce. She remonstrated with him, explained pathetically that a Presbyterian could not countenance these worldly vanities; and he in his turn threatened to resume his rags unless she consented to gratify him by wearing what he had chosen. After much good-natured wrangling a compromise was reached. She accepted certain gowns that befitted her station, and he refrained from further impositions on condition that she would not discard the luxurious Russian sables he had purchased.

This diverting comedy was in its final stage when, on the last day of November, a telegram was received from London. It read: "My daughter, Miss Rowallan, is at my house in London, where the friend of her deceased uncle can meet her whenever it suits his convenience." That and nothing more. No explanations, no letter.

Such reticence was not reassuring, and yet, as Pitsligo pointed out, as family affairs were involved, it was not surprising that the Master of Rowallan should hesitate to be more communicative. It was therefore decided not to attempt any further correspondence, but to set out at once for the English metropolis. The preparations for the journey were speedily made, and the very next day the towers of Eskburgh palace were lost to view.

Before departing Pitsligo gathered the domestics round him, conciliated them by the richness of his gifts, and quite overcame their antipathy and prejudices by assuring them that he would promise that the ancient house should never pass into the hands of the stranger. He was particularly thoughtful of the aged gillie, Pinkie Cleuch, and his voice lost its steadiness in bidding him farewell. It was observed by Dick that the night before

Digitized by Google

he left, he went out into the garden and stood for nearly an hour gazing up at a window as though he expected some one to greet him from the casement. When he entered the palace for the last time, he said to his servant:

"Pack up my cast-off garments and let them go with us."

"But," remonstrated Dick, "they are not worth the trouble, and the trash ——"

The sentence was not completed for the old man interrupted him.

"We hold in reverence the neglected, tattered churchyard overrun with weeds and briers, because our dead sleep there; we respect the humble, roofless, doorless house, through whose rents the wind sighs plaintively, because our most innocent and peaceful hours were spent there. So something sacred is buried in those frayed and seamy clothes, and within their folds a poor heart has experienced its most blameless joys. Do not destroy them. They have been worn in the gorgeous gardens of fair and flowery Australia, and in the presence of the glorious sun, and they may surely without apology be wrapped up and laid away even in a duke's palace."

"So be it, sir," replied the veteran, bringing his hand to the salute.

"But," inquired his master, changing the subject, "what think you of Auld Reekie?"

"In some spots, sir, it is very much like your cast off clothes, rather dilapidated and worse for wear."

"But picturesque!"

"Yes; and again like your abandoned costume, picturesque, sir, but not modern."

Digitized by Google

XVI

THE INHUMANITY OF MAN TO WOMAN

EXTENDING from Shoreditch to Bethnal Green, from Bethnal Green to Spitalfields, and onward along the course of the river, by the way of Commercial Road to Stepney, including Jewry Street, not far from Whitechapel, and Whitechapel itself, London is a desolate, monotonous, sprawling waste of obdurate, expressionless and bewildering brick and mortar. Raphael Street, Squirries Street, Florida Street, Ivimey Street and the rest are substantially counterparts of one another, and were it not for such landmarks as Christ's Church, St. Clements, Zion's Chapel, the unpretentious Friends' Meeting House, and the People's Palace, the stranger once involved in this labyrinth would probably be hopelessly lost.

The population inhabiting this vast and complicated area is more picturesque and varied than its surroundings. In addition to the very large, respectable, commonplace British element, there is a numerous assortment of foreigners, respectable and otherwise, a host of vulgar and rapacious Jews who have created a kind of Ghetto and have rendered themselves odious by their sweating shops, and a numberless horde of ragamuffins, criminals, inebriates, and despairing seedy creatures, the wastage and wreckage of humanity, who have been cast on this pitiless beach by the tides of resistless fortune, from whence they are rarely, if ever, reclaimed to honesty and decency. The most pathetic and helpless of all this mighty mass are the children and young girls; the former swarming the streets, learning the lessons of life in the gutter, fed at times by their parents on beer and gin, and taught by adepts in rascality the ways of crime;

Digitized by Google

the latter crowding shop, factory and sweater's den, or working with little pause in stuffy, sunless, unsanitary and villainously smelling rooms, and, by the hardness of their lot and the dullness of their moral sense, exposed to the most horrible and cruel fate that can befall a woman.

This is the largest industrial district of the great metropolis. Here, where scores of poor women repair worm-eaten nutmegs at twopence a gross, here where they make necklaces at two shillings and threepence a gross, here where for thirteen hours work at match-box-making they earn one shilling and threepence, here where they are paid one farthing each for finishing common shirts, here where twenty-five thousand tailoresses are compelled to toil sixteen or seventeen hours a day for a penny an hour, generally in close, filthy tenement houses bordering on uneven pavements, furnishing tiny reservoirs for stagnant pools of water, and exposed to vile exhalations which proceed from large piles of refuse, —here, in this *Il Inferno* of woman, where she is tortured, tempted, crushed, cursed, she reads over its sullen portals "She who enters here leaves hope behind."

This is the domain of tragedy, where the victim is usually a woman, a woman starving while she toils, a woman beaten and robbed of her wages by a brutal scoundrel of a husband, a woman fading away over her machine in her hopeless endeavour to keep hunger and death from her sin-born babe, a woman maddened by strong drink in the effort to drown her sense of wrong, or a woman outcast in heart and outcast in life, mocking the glory of her own sex while she preys on the weakness of the other, and in danger as she reels from the bar of "The Norfolk Arms" and turns into the darkened lane to sink beneath the murderous blows of a "Jack the Ripper."

On the morning after her departure from Hackney, Fiona Youtsay peered through the dirt-dimmed window of her modest chamber in the "Wessex," and dreamily thought of what was to her a new world, a world she

Digitized by Google

was about to explore, and in which she hoped to lose her identity. Her sleep had brought to her neither rest nor refreshment, and her troubled reflections during the night had in no degree abated her indignation. She was angry, hurt in her pride, and more than ever inclined to magnify the wrong that had been done her by her mother. To be born out of wedlock was to her sensitive nature a shame so unutterably great that she, the innocent one, was tainted by its foulness as much as the guilty.

She contemplated for a little while the skean dhu she had hidden about her person when she abandoned her home, and which had lain all night ready to her hand in case of emergency; but whatever grim temptation had invaded her soul she firmly resisted and finally rejected. She had seen a chasm yawn at her feet, and she had turned away from the horrible possibility, exclaiming: "Get thee behind me, Satan." The thought of suicide, however, suggested another thought. Although she might not murder herself, there was no reason why she should not cast off a name to which she had no right, and in this way obliterate in some measure from her memory her former self. No sooner conceived than executed, and as she considered what name would best suit her, and realized that whatever she did it would not be becoming in her to disguise herself like a vulgar criminal fleeing from justice, she recollected her mother's having once or twice mentioned her grandmother, and concluded that she would be justified in assuming her name. Sibilla Macgillivray sounded odd and was old-fashioned, but then it was hers by right of family descent, and while it would serve to conceal her, its adoption would hardly expose her to base insinuations.

Like multitudes of other young people, Fiona had grown up in ignorance of family history. She had never been inquisitive, had never inquired into the past, and consequently had no knowledge of the events which had shrouded the last days of her maternal grandparent in gloom. Her mother had only incidentally alluded to

Digitized by Google

this worthy woman, and she had been so preoccupied with her own affairs that she had never sought more precise information.

As she looked into the mirror and wondered what kind of a being this Sibilla Macgillivray could have been, and smiled even in her sorrow at her own face, there seemed to be gazing over her shoulder a handsome manly man whose red hair quivered as though he were immensely amused at her assumption of so quaint and so unromantic a name. The thought of him recalled the recent scene in St. Helen's Church, and she clasped her hands and wrung them passionately, as through her sobs she murmured to herself: "Lost, lost, forever lost to me; I must banish him from my heart. How his honourable nature would scorn me if he only knew! He could never love a woman born unblessed by the sacred rites of our holy faith! Ah, the mere idea of the thing crushes me!"

An hour later, Fiona Youtsay, having secured her cheap room for another night, issued forth from the "Wessex" in search of a situation and of a decent boarding and lodging house. She took the road leading to Whitechapel, for she had heard that, while the entire East End employed thousands of women, Whitechapel furnished the most desirable and the best paying positions. Absorbed in what she saw, the garish shops, the costermongers' carts, the roaring traffic, the lumbering 'buses, the little children in every stage of dirt and neglect, the overgrown brazen-looking girls, the slouching men shambling into the public houses, and the coarse women, sometimes with babes in their arms, trooping out or standing in noisy, hilarious groups about the entrance, Fiona as she pursued her way was unconscious of the attention she aroused, and failed to hear the comments her appearance called forth.

"'Arry 'Awkins," cried out a bricklayer from the lower rungs of his ladder to a chum higher up, "did ye ever see such a Piccadilly Toff? Swot my bob and a pair of two-eyed steaks but she's a bloomin' daisy."

Digitized by Google

His mate looked down on the vision of beauty passing by, and nearly let his bricks fall, as he answered:

"Jakes, right ye are an' no mistake."

A rough coster stared at her and relieved his pent up emotions by bawling as though it were a love ditty:

"That's all shove behind me
Long ago and far away,
And there ain't no 'buses running
From the Bank to Mandalay."

Oblivious to these tributes, the girl walk steadily onward until she came to a pretentious and gaudy looking shop much larger than its neighbours, devoted to all kinds of wearing apparel for women. It seemed to be a miniature reproduction of Shoolbred's or Marshal Snelgrove's. Fiona saw that the entire establishment was occupied by her own sex, behind the counters as well as before, with the exception of certain portions of the floor that were paraded by a few solemn specimens of the opposite sex.

Therefore, she took courage, and approaching one of the melancholy men, inquired for the manager. The charm of her personal appearance gained for her prompt admission into the presence of that exalted personage, a puffy, bald-pated, much-perspiring individual, who rejoiced in the name—Romeo Wobbles. Romeo rose politely as soon as she entered, but when she falteringly told her errand he quickly resumed his seat and began to eye her impertinently. His visitor did not observe his manner, and went on to give an account of her qualifications as a stenographer and typist.

"And what wages do you expect," inquired Romeo Wobbles, as he began to feel in his susceptible bosom the spell of her wonderful beauty, "that is, how much would we have to pay for such talents? We've never hired a typist here yet, but we've been thinking of doing so. Tell me the bottom figure."

Fiona now lifted up her glorious eyes that had been downcast, and answered: "Would it not be better, sir, for you to suggest the price?"

Digitized by Google

"Well," he replied in an unnecessarily loud voice, "we don't pay high salaries here. The business don't justify that sort of thing, you know. And I'm not sure we want a type-lady. Can't tell for a few days. But if we do, what do you say to ten shillings a week?"

"Ten shillings! Why I don't see how I could live and look respectable on so small a sum."

"Umph!" responded the oleaginous Wobbles, as he stretched himself at full length in his chair as though it were a sofa, and then blinking his small pig eyes added: "Don't be foolish. I want only reasonable women about me. Have you no friend who could and would assist you?"

"Friend," answered Fiona, not relishing the peculiar way that sacred word had been pronounced, and beginning to feel a positive dislike to the speaker—"Friend! No, I am self-reliant and have no intention of becoming dependent on any one."

Romeo Wobbles gathered himself together, sat up in his chair and mopped his bald head with a red handkerchief. He then said half-inquiringly:

"You pretend not to understand. Perhaps you don't. Well, never mind. But if you come to us I'll find you a friend who'll look after you."

The intonation of his voice, and the undisguised expression of admiration in his flabby face, were not lost on Fiona. She could not help, notwithstanding her maidenly innocence, suspecting his meaning although she did not grasp it in all of its enormity. This place, she realized, was unfit for her to tarry in, and without further words, she drew her skirts around her, as if to shield them from the pollution of the room, and turned contemptuously and in queenly fashion left the office. As she passed through the large shop into the street her heart within her was filled with compassion for the poor girls behind the counters, smiling on customers, whose reputable and sometimes Christian employers by paying a starvation wage forced them into sin, and in a very real sense shared with them the earnings of their shame.

Digitized by Google

The second day of Fiona's quest was not unlike the first, and the third was not very different from the second. Still she obtained at every turn fresh insight into East End life, particularly among the poor of her own sex. One day as she left a factory where many girls were employed, her arm was touched by a young woman who had followed her to the street.

"Say, what's yer name? I likes you." She who spoke was simply one of a class, plainly dressed, stunted in growth, haggard in feature, and familiar in manner,—simply a working woman, old before her time, and such an one as our eminently humane civilization is turning out each year by the thousands with its other adulterated and brummigen wares.

Fiona stopped and answered gently: "Sibilla Macgillivray. Why do you ask?" Then hurriedly, "Perhaps you are in need; can I help you?"

"Naw, I don't want nothink to-day, thank 'ee. What a queer name that is o' yourn. My name's queer as yourn too,—Sarsafras Maloney. They calls me Sass fur short."

"Well, Sass," Fiona inquired with the music of kindness in her voice, "what do you want? Why have you spoken to me?"

"'Cos I likes you. I wants you to come to our lodgin' house. Lots o' gals there and lots o' young fellers too. See?" Evidently Sass was anxious to assist Fiona out of what to her dull perception was a dilemma. She had heard the foreman's talk, and had concluded that if Fiona only had had a "feller" she would have accepted the starvation wages offered, and in the kindness of her heart she desired to put the lonely stranger in the way of supplying herself with that very necessary appendage. With this benevolent end in view she rambled on in her talk about the privileges of the lodging house, explaining that the girls' sweethearts were free to come at any hour after supper and stay as long as they pleased, that they were not only generous with their money but were liberal with their love as well, occasionally changing about from

Digitized by Google

one young sweetheart to another, and then, when out of breath, she ended with the eloquent interrogatory—"See?"

Fiona was astounded, as well she might be, especially at the matter-of-fact way in which this working girl chattered on the most pathetic and tragic phase of modern life. Her language or her manner had betrayed no sense of shame or sentiment, and she could not have been more composed had she been talking on the most commonplace theme. The native tact of Fiona saved her from expressing the sharp scorn she felt; for she comprehended the truth that the girl's insensibility was due rather to her surroundings and her unhappy miseducation, than to anything abnormally wicked in her nature. She replied, however, somewhat frigidly: "Such a place as you describe would not suit me, and if I understand you it is not a fit place for any girl."

Only partly grasping the meaning of these words, Sass yet warmly retorted: "Why, the bloomin' bishops an' the swell parsons uv the deestrict have guv our 'ouse a good name. It's all werry fine to talk as you do, but you don't cop me going, you bet. Blow me, if I sees any 'arm in fellers, wot pays fur corfee an' the gaff, and helps us keep on in bizness."

Fiona began to realize with a shudder the hopelessness of expostulation, and, therefore, instead of pursuing the distasteful subject further, attempted to bring the unpleasant interview to a close by saying: "Good-bye; don't forget your Church, and may God bless you!"

But this was too much for Sass, and she broke forth hotly and energetically: "Gawd bless me! Wot 'ave I to do with Gawd? I don't believe in no Gawd nor nothink, and I won't 'ave you jam yer religion down my throat."

"Believe me," replied Fiona, with her sweetest smile, "I had no intention of wounding your feelings or of giving offense. I am not intruding my religion on you; I only want you to think of your own and be guided by it."

Digitized by Google

"Yes, I've a religion uv my own. I goes to Mass once a year but I takes jolly good care never to let the priests cross my thrishold. They allers comes for chink. An' fur them missionaries an' blokes, I niver lets 'em come a-singin' an' a-hollerin' round me. I ain't afeared, an' when I die I shall know the great secret."

Fiona's interest was aroused anew by the last sentence, and she asked: "What do you mean by the great secret?"

"I means when the breath's gone out o' me, whether I shall be nothink. I'm nothink here, and we girls wonder whether we shall be nothink yonder, or be bloomin' hangels an' with the hangels stand."

"And this is your religion, my friend?"

"Yes, a poor girl hain't time for no other. Gawd, if there is a Gawd, must put hup with this. Religion's werry well fur folks as ain't got to work six days—an' seven sometimes—ter jest get a rag an' a bite, but can drive in carriages an' shut 'emselves up lonesome-like in a pew an' pray about bein' meeserable sinners. When ye're a poor lass in Lunnon, an' a horfin, Gawd an' the blessed Mother won't be 'ard if she goes once a year, an' only once, to Mass an' sometimes says her beads on Sunday afore the fellers comes."

Fiona was inexpressibly saddened by what she heard, and was grateful when the conversation was abruptly brought to a close by a zealous and suspicious policeman who politely urged the young women to "move on." She was strongly inclined to keep moving on until the wilderness should be left far behind her and a refuge and occupation be found in some quiet and suburban neighbourhood. But she resumed her disspiriting search, and was not particularly mindful of the road she took. It was past the noon hour, but she cared not for refreshments and continued almost aimlessly her walk. Unnoticed by herself she drifted from the main thoroughfare and entered the tangle of smaller streets. After wandering through several of them she passed along Squirries Street, and her further progress was seemingly blocked

Digitized by Google

by a house, surrounded by a high brick wall on the top of which was a plentiful assortment of broken glass.

The building standing where the road makes a sudden bend creates the impression that there is no egress beyond. It was this illusion that arrested the steps of Fiona, and aroused her interest in the premises themselves. She scrutinized them. The house, she saw, was larger than others in its vicinity, was evidently older, but was as inartistic, hard-featured, dingy and ugly as the rest. Its architecture was distinctly of the London type, square, angular and hideously expressionless. In the wall near the gateway a stone, once white, had been inserted, and it bore the name "Ivernia Cottage," but the date which once had been legible was worn and undecipherable. Fiona had drawn near for the purpose of making out the inscription, when a little girl opened the gate and in a friendly way looked up into her face. Her heart warmed to the child, and she drew her to her side, stroked her hair and spoke kind and tender words. She could not but perceive that the young creature had not been properly cared for, and that neglect was evident in her attire and in her unwashed hands and face.

The two became companionable at once. The child nestled close to the woman, and the woman fondled the child. They both acted as if they were lonely in this East End wilderness, and were overjoyed at last to find a kindred human soul They smiled, laughed and chatted, and, notwithstanding Fiona's remonstrance, her new acquaintance insisted with the utmost candour on communicating all she knew about herself and her family.

"My name is Lena, Lena Shane," she said, "and I'se come all the way from Australia to see grandma die. An' she won't die quick an' go to heaven, an' mother's sick, an' dad he's just crazy to have grandma with the angels. An' so'm I," she added innocently, "for down here she's cross an' ugly—a horrid ol' thing—an' she'll be better off in heaven, won't she?"

"Ah! Lena, you mustn't talk in that way. You know, dear, it is a very solemn thing to die, and we must

Digitized by Google

not say anything unkind of those who are soon to stand in the presence of their Maker."

"Oh, I don't care," Lena replied, poutingly. "Dad says grandma'll be better off up there in the sky;" and then, more dubiously, she continued, "but I don't think the folks up there'll be glad when she gets there."

The child had scarcely uttered the last word of this frank and guileless deliverance, when the gate was thrust wider open, and the stout, burly form of a man appeared. He was not above medium height, and though poorly clad was repellent neither in face nor manner. Distinctly he invited confidence. His eyes were clear and honest, and his countenance suggested nothing of a shifty, foxy, or criminal character. He was straightforward in his ways, and spoke, acted and looked as one who had nothing to conceal. No one, seeing him, would ever have suspected him of roguery or of double-dealing, or would have thought of him other than as the embodiment of integrity in distress. He addressed the child the very moment he stepped into view, exclaiming:

"Hurry, Lena, you must come in and watch by your mother while I try to find the clergyman."

As he saw Fiona he stopped suddenly, and his speech faltered into silence. He held on to the gate and did not move an inch. The woman before him had confused him by her beauty. He had never before seen a human being so dignified and lovely. Instinctively he bowed and began an apology. Fiona, who had been disposed to trust him as soon as she saw him, relieved his embarrassment by hastening to proffer her services:

"Excuse me, sir, may I not be of assistance to you? I am a stranger to you, but if you will allow me I will go in search of a clergyman. It may be well for you to stay and watch by your sick."

The proposal, so unexpected and so graciously made, if anything but her own presence had been needed, completed her ascendancy over the mind of Foyle Shane. He was delighted and could hardly find words to express his gratitude.

Digitized by Google

"Such kindness on your part, miss," he stammered, "reconciles one to live in this wicked world. I thank you. I'm too poor even to hire a cab for you, and I wouldn't trouble you, but the end may now come at any moment. The old woman is in distress, and mumbles through her groans that she can't die until she makes a confession to a priest——"

"Then, send for one quick, dad,"—interrupted the uncomplimentary and uncomfortably honest Miss Lena. Without noticing the child Foyle Shane continued:

"Before the arrival of my wife—who is an invalid—and myself in answer to a summons, her mother had been visited by a clergyman who has recently come to this parish, and whose offices she now wants, although she hasn't treated him very well when he called before. His name is the Reverend Blair Hamley, sometimes called 'The Bishop of Bethnal Green.'"

"Yes, yes, I know him!" Fiona impulsively replied.

"Then, young lady, I'm fortunate in my messenger. Here, take this letter I've scrawled and urge him to come at once. You'll meet him at the church, or at his lodgings near by, or at the 'Working Girls' Friendly Union,' where he spends a good deal of time. But, there, I trust you. I know there'll be no delay. I wish I could send you in a carriage."

Fiona with a few hurried, incoherent words, meant to be reassuring, kissed the child who had been clinging to her skirts, grasped the letter, and plunged with a rush into the maze of narrow streets, leading, as she knew they must lead, to a larger thoroughfare. Nor was she mistaken. After making a few turns to the right she saw just before her a broad avenue and the ceaseless stream of traffic. It took only a few minutes for her to join the crowds in the wide open street. She moved onwards with them until she came to a cab-stand, and hailing a hansom she entered and ordered the driver to make all haste, as she was on an errand of life and death. Crack, went Jehu's whip, wheezingly and ambitiously went Jehu's nag, and creakingly and joltingly went Jehu's

Digitized by Google

coach. But Fiona's success was not encouraging. Blair Hamley was not to be found at the church, nor at the "Friendly Union"—and the lady in charge looked aghast when Fiona dashed up in a cab and inquired so imperiously for him—and he was even absent from his lodgings. The domestic slavey there tendered the information that the clergyman had been called to the "doss house," No. —— Dorset Street, as some one was killed or dying there. That was sufficient for Fiona. She left the letter for Blair Hamley in the hands of his servant lest she herself should continue to miss him, reentered the hansom, and called through the opening in the roof:

"Quick, please, to No. —— Dorset Street, Spitalfields."

The driver was startled and shocked, and from his airy perch, looking as best he could through the tiny aperture at his adventurous fare, he answered—"But miss, don't ye know that that 'ere number is a 'doss house'?"

"Yes," she replied imperatively, "but don't lose a moment. Drive on!"

Bang went the little window, and Jehu touched up his horse. Whistling as he drove, he looked inquiringly, as though seeking information, at the bit of flower in his buttonhole, and then, at last, as his destination came in sight, said to himself:

"Blow'd, if I cares even to drive into Dorset Street. But I'll stand by the gal anyway. Here goes. An' jest to think of it, I'm risking my neck in the worst street of the East End. My, as my better 'alf says, what duffers we men are!"

Digitized by Google

XVII

THE UNCONSECRATED BISHOP OF BETHNAL GREEN

IT must be admitted that Blair Hamley was rather an unconventional clergyman. The "dossers" throughout the East End liked him none the less on that account. When he gave his "At Homes" to the dilapidated denizens of the doss houses, and furnished sandwiches and coffee instead of tracts and sermons, his disreputable guests thought him a "rum kind o' cove, but one o' the right sort," while his religious associates, the dignified scions of ecclesiastical traditionalism, frowned on his very unclerical conduct. And yet Blair Hamley was high churchman to the tips of his fingers, believed in the Apostolicity of Anglican orders, venerated the sacraments, magnified priestly celibacy and religious brotherhoods and sisterhoods, and was a fervent advocate of the confession.

Despite his sacerdotalism, and the mediævalistic type of his faith, he was thoroughly fraternal and sympathetic in his spirit, cheerfully made himself servant to the poorest and least worthy of his fellow-beings, and recognized the insufficiency of high-sounding assumptions, and the glitter and the show of gilded and candle-illumined altars to feed the body or satisfy the hunger of the soul. To him the temple was worthy of homage and devotion; but with his Master, he held man to be greater than the temple. The Church he loved; but though he might not say it, he always acted as though he felt that the humblest sinner had more imperative claims upon him than the Church. His parish he acknowledged was not a model one, and his parishioners he often said sadly were as a rule an unsanctified lot.

Digitized by Google

They had their virtues as well as their vices, however, and in the worst of them, somewhere hidden under the rubbish of their wasted days, there yet survived some trace of goodness. They were in many instances merely wrecks; but, then, he was no wrecker. It was his business to tow the water-logged hulk to the harbour, not to scuttle the ship with scathing and biting denunciations. When his aristocratic friends and associates ridiculed his zeal, he answered that doubtless they had admired the adventurers who had travelled far, had searched unweariedly, and laboured diligently with pick and shovel, and had sunken shafts through the hard rock for the sake of discovering a seam of gold, and it was strange to him that they should count as less worthy and dignified the endeavours, involving hardships and sacrifices, of the few heroic souls who were seeking to bring to light the beauty and glory of the manhood and womanhood that had been buried deep beneath the accumulated sins and sorrows of misdirected lives. "Was not a man of more importance to society than a golden ingot?" His critics, being religious dignitaries, dared not, for very consistency's sake, dispute his inference; but their fingers fondled the loose sovereigns in their pockets in a way they had never for a single moment touched the rags and sores of Lazarus suffering at their gate.

Strictly speaking, the parish of Blair Hamley was not as extensive as the entire East End, but he did not always respect its boundaries, and was ready to answer calls from any quarter. This gave rise to various strictures on the part of those whose ecclesiastical reservations had been occasionally invaded. Yet as the offender did his best not to supersede his ministerial brethren in their functions, and as the sweet offices of love and sympathy cannot be restricted or regulated by canon law, he had escaped public censure and had gone his way unmolested by his superiors.

Among the localities most frequently visited by this herculean evangel, whose very shadow brought a blessing,—and whose shadow, like his person, was so large

Digitized by Google

that it blessed many people at a time,—Dorset Street might fairly claim the preeminence. Not only were its necessities more varied and crying in their intensity than those of other neighbourhoods, but its hybrid, lawless and wretched denizens were unwilling to tolerate the presence of any other clergyman than that of him whom they had styled in their rough humour, the "Bishop of Bethnal Green."

Dorset Street, Spitalfields, is not a long street nor a wide street, nor one particularly inviting. It runs parallel with White's Row, and both of them, like two sewers, end in a dirty, squalid quagmire of a square, where Jewish children, sneak thieves of all ages, and the tatterdemalions of human society swarm in the sunshine, whenever the sun brings into relief the hideousness of the scene. Here abide in comparative safety the common thief, the pickpocket, the unconvicted murderer, the brutal assaulters, the men who are called the knuckle-dusters, the unruly boys who want to lead a free life, the women who have shared in the almost inevitable ruin which comes on their sex in such localities, and the men and women who are not criminals, but who are "out of a job," "down on their luck," and who are driven by hard necessity, often the tyranny of their own craving for strong drink, to seek a shelter with these ravening and growling wolves. Here violence is common; here murders are committed monthly; here almost each house can boast of at least one murder, and one house claims a murder for each room; here hunger prowls in the alleys and lies in wait for a victim. Policemen do not care to traverse its broked pavements except in pairs, and decent citizens gaze down its entire length fascinated by the horrors which the house-fronts hide, and which they tremble even to imagine.

With pardonable hesitancy the cabman turned into Dorset Street, and pulled up in front of No. ——, a doss house called the "Eagle," of unenviable notoriety, and which at that very moment was exciting the attention of a clamorous and tattered group of idlers. The building

Digitized by Google

itself was unsavoury and unclean, and the poor lodgers who had sought refuge there at fourpence a night were neither refined nor peaceably inclined. Their accommodations were not conducive to amiability or repose.

The single men herded together in wretchedly ventilated dormitories. On another floor there was a large room divided by partitions some five or six feet in height, into cubicles where single women obtained a bed, or where married couples shifted for the night. Unfortunately, as the deputy who cared for the place was always very busy in the evening assigning quarters to his motley patrons, he had no time to inquire into their character, and this failure did not enhance the reputation of the establishment, and did not contribute to its serenity or comfort; for often mismated "doubles" would fall out with each other in the cubicles or in the "doubles' kitchen," where they were permitted to prepare their morning meal.

Such a rupture of domestic felicity had occurred early on that very day in which Fiona Youtsay, not knowing really whither she went, had set out in search of Blair Hamley. The bloody episode was over before she alighted from the cab; the storm had spent its fury, but its echoes were rumbling all around her.

Fiona threaded her way through the little crowd hovering about the entrance to the doss house, and her ladylike appearance turned the thoughts of the tattling women from the tragedy of the morning to herself. "Who could she be?" "Where did she come from?" "What did she want?" "Does she know where she's going?" were some of the questions whispered by those who saw her calmly open the door and, without the least trepidation, enter in. Those who were nearest to her, and whose curiosity had impelled them to press hard after her, with amazement heard her inquire whether the Rev. Blair Hamley had been there and whether he was on the premises. Immediately the word passed from one woman to another that the toff was asking for the "dossers'" bishop, and by the time it had reached the

Digitized by Google

outer circle of the throng it had grown into a very serious implication. The eminent proprieties of Dorset Street were being compromised, and its respectability was shocked at the prospect of a clerical scandal. What was merely a vague suspicion deepened into something approaching certainty in the mind of the unfortunates who found it not an easy matter to think well of their fellow-beings.

One vicious-looking harridan suggested that the dignity of Dorset Street should be vindicated by visiting condign punishment on "the swell who was a-leadin' their bloomin' parson astray." Another, better-featured and younger, working her long-nailed fingers ominously, avowed her willingness to tear all the finery off the back of the temptress and leave on the pretty face some enduring marks of her virtuous indignation. These sentiments met with general approval, and the buzz of voices, like the sighing of the wind, betokened dirty and dangerous weather in the offing. Meanwhile Fiona, oblivious to the commotion she had stirred, continued her inquiries.

She had been led to the "doubles' kitchen" by a slatternly girl, where she was greeted by an overmastering smell of unwashed humanity, cheap tea, broiled herrings and onions. The scene was as strange to her as it was unexpected. She stood alone and unprotected in the centre of all kinds and conditions of men and women, degenerates, inebriates, emaciated and worn, and roughs and hooligans of both sexes, who now towards the evening were discussing the events of the morning, and planning their arrangements for the night. Instinctively she clutched at the skean dhu hidden beneath her outer jacket, and in a steady voice again simply asked for the Rev. Blair Hamley who was needed to console an aged woman in her dying moments.

At first, no answer was returned. The tattered company were stupefied by this sudden appearance in their midst of a maiden so different in every way from those of her sex with whom they were accustomed to mingle.

Digitized by Google

One man, especially, red-headed and young, apparently an artisan out of work, dressed in corduroy, whose blackened eye and bruised face bore witness to a recent combat, was startled when he saw her enter the room. He gazed at her wonderingly, and then, recovering himself, pulled his soft felt hat over his face as far as possible, and drew away from those nearest her towards the shadowed corner of the kitchen.

"Ye want the bishop, missus, do yer?" inquired a thin, cadaverous lodger, and there was a leer in his eye and a tone of incredulous sarcasm in his voice, "and for the sake of another woman, eh? But let me tell yer he wus here, an' he didn't ax fur ye, either. Yes, yer see Jo wus for a-wolloppin' of his pardner in the 'doubles,' an' she runs in here to get out of his way. An' he fetched her a blow with his fist as might 'a' felled a ox, an' she was a nigh killed. Then, ye see as Jo was a-goin' fur her agin I'm blowed if a young feller with red hair, who's a newcomer in this 'er doss 'ouse, didn't let Jo 'ave it right an' left. He called Jo a hulkin' coward for a 'itin' of a woman, an' let drive at 'im. It wus a pretty mill an' no mistake. The young feller just jumped and capered roun' big Jo and polished 'im off in fine style. Uv course 'e got some scratches 'imself, an' didn't finish the job as some one cried 'perlice,' an' as Jo thought 'e might 'ave got his pardner to sleep fer good he made 'is way through the back door an' vamoosed."

Sickened by the brutal recital and yet touched with sympathy for the poor creature who had been so roughly handled by her husband, Fiona could not refrain from asking: "Did the woman recover? What was done with her?"

"Well, missus, the women-folk hev tuk care uv her until this hafternoon when yer bishop came hup smilin' an' 'e carries 'er orf ter the Luke's 'orspital. Red-head Jake seed him, tho' I'm blowed if 'eed speak to 'im. Didn't yer, Jake?" He turned to where the young artisan had been seated as seeking confirmation, but he of the red hair had left the kitchen.

Digitized by Google

"Then as Mr. Hamley is not there, I need not stay longer. I will look for him at the hospital. Thank you for your information." Fiona spoke gravely and her face betokened anxiety, yet with dignified composure she took a step or two towards the door. Before she could withdraw the same cadaverous dosser who had constituted himself spokesman for his fellow-dossers, jeeringly answered:

"An' you, young 'oman, do yer take us fur sech bloomin' blokes as to believe anythink that ye've ben a-sayin' about the old un? Wot yer a-wantin' is the bishop fur yer own dear self." This speech was followed by cackles, laughter and caterwaulings from his companions in vice and degradation. Poor Fiona, shocked by this monstrous accusation, reeled as though she had been cut with a lash across the face. As she tried to retreat the heartless wretch followed giving utterance to vile words and declaring that "she was a sneak an' a bad un," and the rest of the pack yelled with delight. No longer parleying, and smitten at the heart by a great fear, the insulted girl turned and fled, but just as her foot touched the threshold a rude hand was laid on her, and the dosser shouted out: "Gawd blind me if I don't take it out of yer!"

The self-imprecation was barely invoked when a well-trained fist planted a terrible blow between the eyes that shut out the light and prostrated the scoundrel prone and speechless on the floor. It was the red-headed workman who had proven himself so chivalrous a champion in the morning brawl. His hat was still drawn down over his eyes, and he was wild and furious. When Fiona's persecutors saw him they reeled back towards the kitchen as though they too had shared the punishment so righteously inflicted.

Her deliverer drew close to her and hoarsely urged her to keep near him and press forward to the street. She was bewildered, and was almost carried by her defender to the waiting cab. When they appeared on the doorstep, he with his strong arm about her for support, they

Digitized by Google

were met with jeers and mocking taunts, such as "he's off with the bishop's missus!" "shame on them!" "down with the red un!" "the parson luves 'er in the speeritual sense!" But the workman used his disentangled hand to make way for himself and his charge, and the "cabby" in his driver's nest comprehending sufficiently that his fare was in danger of being overwhelmed by numbers, swung his whip about him threateningly, and treated the crowd to a choice selection of picturesque East End adjectives.

Almost as swift as his own thought the humble champion lifted the rescued maiden bodily into the hansom, and she, recovering from her extreme alarm, thrust her arm through the window in the roof and cried out to the driver: "Ivernia Cottage." The horse roused by the lash from his blissful slumber plunged instantly ahead, almost overturning the red-headed knight-errant, and scattering men, women and children in wild dismay.

The incident was closed. Unfortunates and degenerates such as these do not bear malice long. On this occasion they chaffed one another, grumbled a bit, and those who were fortunate enough to have an extra penny strolled in pairs to the nearest public house there to forget their excitement in gin. He, whom they named Jake, stood still, gazing with wistful eyes down the empty street over whose stones Fiona's cab had borne her to safety. His manner was irresolute. He was as one divided between two opinions. As he pondered, now with his hat pushed back on his red head, he observed that his hand was bleeding.

He examined the wound carelessly. It had caused him no inconvenience. Indeed, he had been unconscious of it, and had no idea that it had been caused by a tiny weapon clutched by Fiona in her fright. He wrapped it round about with a handkerchief, and hurried on as if anxious to escape from the shadows of Dorset Street. As soon as he reached the main thoroughfare and came across a policeman he inquired, and that too in an imperative tone of voice quite unusual with a

Digitized by Google

dosser: "Officer, can you direct me to Ivernia Cottage?"

It was already quite dark when the cab entered Squirries Street. Fiona alighted from the hansom, thanked the driver and gave him all she could spare from her slender purse. She would have detained him for the sake of conveying her to the "Wessex," but she dared not further tax her slim resources. The gate yielded to her touch, and as soon as she knocked the door of the house was opened by Foyle Shane, who received her heartily in his reassuring honest way.

After her experiences the sight of him calmed her and produced the delightful sense of security, almost inclining her to say aloud: "What a comfort it is to be in the presence of a man who is straightforward and who has nothing to conceal." As she grasped his proffered hand he said: "He is here. He arrived on time, thanks to your leaving the message for him. The old woman is near her end, but she has confessed and he has talked with her and prayed for her and all's well." As he spoke his eyes were lifted up and his honest face beamed with a radiant smile of satisfaction. He was so genuine and sincere that Fiona would have trusted implicitly to him the most cherished interests of her life. She gave utterance to a few sympathetic words and was about to set out for the "Wessex," when Blair Hamley quietly entered the reception-room and softly closed the door of the chamber where the old creature lay dying.

"She is resting easily," he said, addressing himself to Shane, and for the moment not observing his companion, "but the life is ebbing and it will flow out to the great sea with the night." A slight rustle of her dress brought Fiona to the attention of the clergyman. She was preparing to depart and her back was partly towards him. Seeing her, and not at first recognizing her, he said: "If this is the lady who took such pains to bring me the message, let me thank you. Possibly you may never know until you reach heaven the good you have done." She turned to acknowledge his courtesy,—and he knew

Digitized by Google

her. Greatly astonished, his manner evinced constraint, and he who was usually so self-mastered, stammered:

"You here, daughter, I should never have expected to meet you in this part of the city. May God bless you in this wilderness, daughter."

"Thank you, father, you are ever kind."

"Oh, yes, I remember now, the young lady told me she knew you," interrupted Foyle Shane. "How stupid I was not to think of it, and by the way, if you are acquaintances, you might like to talk a few minutes by yourselves. I ought to be in the old woman's room, for my wife isn't fit to be left alone with her." Suiting the action to the word, he stealthily went into the adjoining apartment and closed the door, but not too tight.

"Your mission here, holy father, must have been a sad one, and yet how great is the privilege of ministering to the sorrowing and the suffering."

"Yes," he answered, "the sacred office has its compensations. In this instance, however, the strain has been very severe, for I have had to listen to a harrowing story. Would God I could forget it." Fiona did not speak. His noble face wore a troubled look. Fiona felt herself unworthy to attempt in her poor speech to express her sympathy. The silence was painful and remained unbroken for several seconds. At last he recalled himself and in a voice full of grave concern, he inquired:

"May I, without presumption, venture to ask what brings you to this part of London where innocence is in hourly peril, where good names are tarnished and where reputations are smirched?"

As he spoke Fiona could not but remember her humiliating experiences in Dorset Street, and she was tempted to tell him all, but she drew back for very shame. He observed her hesitancy and hastened to disclaim any desire to invade the sanctity of her confidence. He added: "After all, I am almost an entire stranger to you. Our casual meetings in St. Helen's give me no right to catechize you and no claim on your regard.

Digitized by Google

You have not even favoured me so far as to disclose your name——"

"Excuse me, won't you?" she replied interrupting him, "my name is Sibilla Macgillivray, and I told you in the old church that I earned my own support." Her tongue faltered as she spoke, and she changed colour too. Blair Hamley was oblivious to these signs of partial disingenuousness, and had she said stranger things by far he would hardly have been the wiser, as he was thinking of her and not of her speech, and dreaming anew the dream he had dreamed in the ancient sanctuary, of home, of wife and children. The feelings he had striven against so manfully only a few days before had returned with increased force, and the terrible temptation was on him to cast his celibacy and asceticism to the winds. He restrained himself, however, and forcing himself down to the stern reality of the position he occupied, he remarked, but with an earnestness which in another might have been taken for affection:

"Miss Macgillivray——"

"Please don't call me Miss or Macgillivray; give me only the Christian name, Sibilla."

"I certainly would not presume to do so without your permission, and I accept your wish as a token of your confidence. I wanted to say, Sibilla, that the question I asked was not prompted by idle curiosity or by any suspicion of your motives or aims. I told you once in the city that I could not in any way associate you with evil, and I still believe, however inexplicable your conduct, that you are seeking only the path of duty for your feet."

"I thank you, reverend father, for your faith. It is not misplaced. This much I may tell you without being disloyal to others: I am here, seeking to escape the taint of a shame not my own, and I ask you, as an honourable man, to assist me to some irreproachable employment, here, anywhere, but away from those who have known me."

"You need say no more, Sibilla. Not another word. And yet there is one thing I must ask, and of your gen-

Digitized by Google

erousness forgive me if I go too far. You remember the last time I saw you in the old church you had an engagement with another gentleman. A great fear took possession of me when I recognized him through the mist in the churchyard after your interview. I knew him. I had known him at the university, and I had known him also only as a man of the most sensitive honour; but he had been away in the army and I feared lest he had lost his high ideals and might lure an unsuspecting girl to her undoing——"

"You did him wrong, sir," Fiona cried earnestly, "you did him wrong; for he breathed no word in my ear the noblest maiden in the land might not have listened to without a blush."

"I thank God for it, for he who spoke to you on that day of mist and darkness is one of the haughtiest men in England."

"His name, reverend sir, his name," Fiona eagerly and breathlessly inquired.

"What! Did not this proud, blameless gentleman introduce himself? Did he leave you in ignorance of his identity? Did he never condescend to say: 'Sibilla, I am——'"

"Who?" impetuously cried Fiona, "tell me who, tell me!" She had half risen from her chair and was intensely agitated, but sank back again as Blair Hamley proceeded: "Not now. Later on, perhaps, but not now. Does not this reticence on his part expose him to suspicion? Why should he hide his name? His course has been uncandid with you, and at least in some degree excuses my forebodings. These forebodings were so strong that for three days after our last meeting I returned to the church that I might warn you. The verger told me you had not been back. He stated that other inquiries had been made for you, and indulged in insinuations which called forth from me a sharp rebuke. I was so anxious about the matter that I sought your companion at several clubs, but could not find him, and when it seemed possible that the worst had happened I returned

Digitized by Google

to my parish, and tried to lose in the wilderness the memory of what I had gone through."

"Then at last you came to believe evil ——"

"Not of you, as God is my Judge, not of you. Nor can I say that I believed it of him. I only feared. Knowing men, I feared, and the fear filled my soul with anguish."

"I suppose now," Fiona replied, and that too somewhat coldly, "you will acquit him of wrong against an innocent girl. I have not seen him since that dreary day."

"And that answers the question I had desired to ask. Such being the case then that to which you alluded as impelling you to seek a refuge as the East End is in no wise connected with him or with your intercourse with him? Or to be plain,—and I take it the question is already answered—he is not responsible for your being here, or for the line of conduct you have chosen for yourself?"

"Not in the least; except that I would keep from him what has befallen me through no fault of mine, and I trust, as you know him, you will not betray me."

"I promise. And more than that, I think I can be of service to you. There is an elderly and lovely woman, whom the girls in the East End call 'the angel,' and who I am sure on her return to-morrow or the day following can and will procure for you a desirable situation, and who will comfort you and hearten you with her own delightful friendship. Where are you staying?"

"At the 'Wessex,' Shoreditch."

"I know it very well, but we must find more congenial and attractive quarters for you as soon as possible." And, then, a sudden idea seizing him, he inquired: "But why could you not stay here for a while? I promised Mr. Shane to send some one who might be able to care for his wife and child during the trial that is every minute more and more imminent. The wife is asthenic and nervous, a feeble-minded, flimsy woman, totally unfitted for an emergency. You would be safe enough here;

Digitized by Google

for," and here he lowered his voice to a whisper, "while I have not much confidence in Shane himself, you would be shielded from all harm by the child's presence and by the shadow of approaching death."

"Oh, do not fear for me," Fiona responded; "if I can be of any service, and especially if I can be of any comfort to the forlorn woman and her child, I will gladly remain."

Blair Hamley added: "At the longest it will only be for three or four days. If you will give me a line to the hotel people, I will have your traps sent here at once, and when this domestic bereavement has passed like a cloud, Miss Angelica, I am certain, will make your interests her own."

"In the meanwhile," said Fiona, "I, unheroic as it may seem, would like something to eat. I have not broken my fast since morning." The disclosure of her long abstinence from food alarmed her clerical friend, and roused him to immediate activity. He hurriedly pushed back the door leading to the sick woman's chamber in quest of Foyle Shane, and nearly upset that scrupulously honest individual, who, as he explained, was just returning to see if his guests were in need of any attention.

Blair Hamley speedily unfolded his plans, explained the situation, and sent Shane for such refreshments as the poor house afforded. After the weary girl had eaten, she quietly ascended the stairs, following the direction of her host, and took possession of a tumble-down room, where little Lena was sleeping the sleep of innocence, and where she herself might rest until death should summon the dying to abandon the tenement of dust and the living to ministrations of sympathy.

Blair Hamley almost immediately left the cottage. He turned the corner of Squirries Street, and saw, as he passed the "Red Dragon," several rough characters, lounging, smoking and drinking, and among them big Jo, the dosser, who was a familiar figure in most of the public houses throughout the East End.

Digitized by Google

The clergyman did not stop or make himself known. As he hastened on he heard the sound of a man's footsteps and realized that he was being followed. Instead of quickening his pace, however, he came to a standstill, and in a moment was face to face with his pursuer. The sickly light of a neighbouring gas jet fell on the two men, and they were within range of the flaring illumination of the "Red Dragon." Blair Hamley did not recognize the young, red-headed artisan, whose face was marred and bruised, and whose corduroys were bespattered with mud. But he perceived that he was excited and that his bearing was threatening. Accustomed to all kinds of perilous incidents, he preserved his coolness and addressed the stranger with seeming unconcern.

"Well, my man, you want to speak with me. In what way can I serve you? Speak on."

"I am minded to say to you, Blair Hamley, that you are a miscreant and a hypocrite."

"Here, here, my friend, go slow," the clergyman replied good-naturedly, imagining his assailant must be demented or tipsy, "by what mischance have I exposed myself to such an indictment? You will not surely arraign me without specifications and substantial proof!"

"I have them both near at hand."

"Where?"

"In Ivernia Cottage."

These words were not without their effect on the clergyman. They chafed him, and notwithstanding his superb self-mastery, he spoke with some irritation.

"I do not see the significance of your answer. May I ask you for a clearer and more definite statement?"

"Yes;" and folding his arms in a dogged fashion the young workman proceeded: "You have just left a lady in Ivernia Cottage. I knew she was going there. For reasons satisfactory to myself I followed her. I did not see her go in, but I saw you come out, and I have concluded that you have been there together, that you are concealing her there from her family, and for the sake of

Digitized by Google

shielding your own reputation, though you have blighted hers." Something in the man's manner of speech, and something more in what he said, provoked a closer scrutiny; and as the result of a quick, sharp searching of form and feature, Blair Hamley purposely refrained from alluding to the insulting language he had heard and, though his face was pale and his fingers twitched, merely remarked:

"Were it not for this masquerading, and for these coarse insinuations, I might have supposed myself in the presence of his Grace, the Duke of Kincardine."

"Your penetration does you credit, most ineffable, though not impeccable Bishop of Bethnal Green," the Red Comyn replied, bowing with mock reverence. "You are also called the 'Dossers' Bishop.' Admirable title! 'Like people, like priest,' is an ancient saying, and doubtless the 'Dossers' Bishop' is much of a kind with the dosser himself."

"Shame on you, your Grace, to forget in this way your own dignity, and the respect due my cloth."

"Your cloth, my lord bishop, not at all! But when its owner lets it drag in the mire, he need not be surprised if it is trampled on by the muddy feet of the scoffer."

"May I suggest to your Grace that you are transcending the bounds of decent familiarity, and grossly violating the courtesies which one gentleman is expected to regard in his intercourse with another?"

"Have I not good reason, my most sanctified bishop," retorted the Red Comyn, "for doubting whether the terms priest and gentleman are synonymous or interchangeable?"

"I do not understand you, sir," replied the clergyman coldly.

"Let me then try to make my meaning plain. After serving my country in the field, I returned home, and in what I regarded as a most fortunate hour I met the only woman I had ever cared to make my wife. An interview was planned, but on the day when it took place the

Digitized by Google

shadow of a huge giant loomed large in the mist-filled aisles of the old church. A foreboding seized me; but it was dispelled when I remembered that the only counterpart to that enormous figure I had ever known was a certain Oxford student who had devoted himself to the service of the Church. I was not sure as to the identity, but the probability was enough to quiet my apprehensions.

"And now, sir, judge for yourself how easily I had imposed on my own credulity, and how my natural veneration for religion had misled me into a false confidence. The woman to whom I had given my heart disappeared. I sought her where I had seen her almost daily, and was received by her employer in the most outrageous manner, and compelled to listen to cruel insinuations. I made further inquiries, and discovered that the girl's father had been at the office of a mercantile house in the city where I have business interests, had acted violently, and had declared that I was the abductor of his daughter. Fortunately he did not know my name, and the clerks did not enlighten him. When I heard of his charges I determined to clear myself from them. At once I said to these clerks who had reported the scene that I was absolutely innocent. They bowed and smiled and assured me that they had not the least doubt of it; and yet there was something in the manner of Chowler and Carfrae that did not accord with their speech, and led me to suspect that they thought I was unnecessarily excited over the affair, and that it might not be an unpardonable offense if a duke were to trifle with the happiness of an obscure girl.

"I thought then of going to her father, but reflection convinced me that that would do no good in his crazed condition. The only way by which I could clear myself, I concluded, was to discover the whereabouts of the missing daughter and bring her aggrieved father to her. Immediately I set about my task. I argued that the clew might be found in St. Helen's, and consequently I went there and sought information from the verger,

Digitized by Google

Nicholas. He was free to tell me that the lady in question had frequently met and conversed with the big clergyman and that he had quite accidentally overheard him say that he was labouring in the East End. That was all I needed to know. The rest of the difficulty I intended to master in my own way. Realizing that dukes are not as popular as parsons at the East End, I deemed it wise to assume the humble guise of a workman, and, like some other individuals, do a little acting on my own account. What has befallen me during the few days I have intruded on your parish I need not recount. Suffice it, I heard only one clergyman's name mentioned in all my wanderings, and that was the 'Dossers' Bishop.' He seemed to be the idol of the poor.

"I did my best to get a view of him, but I was unsuccessful. Much was told me of his ministrations to the neglected creatures who frequent the doss house on Dorset Street, and there I lay in wait for him, and this morning my patience was rewarded. He came. I recognized him. The 'Dossers' Bishop' was none other than the Reverend Blair Hamley.

"But imagine my consternation when during the afternoon, the lady whom I am seeking herself appeared upon the scene. She came asking for Blair Hamley—and in a moment I grasped the situation. He then was responsible for her disappearance—he then had abducted the girl, he——"

"Hush, sir, you go too far," the clergyman interrupted, and for the first time his great eyes flashed and his athletic form trembled with hardly suppressed emotion. "I say again," with intenser sternness, "you are going too far, and you are presuming on my forbearance. Before putting things together that have no connection, you ought at least to seek an explanation from both the lady and the priest."

"What explanation can be given?" passionately retorted the Duke. "Even the dossers called the lady the bishop's 'missus,' and derided the story she told in

Digitized by Google

accounting for her presence. I heard her direct the cabman where to drive her. I followed. I have located her, and, as I expected, the companion of her evening hours in this lonely place is the very Reverend Blair Hamley—the seraphic and the blameless. Fie on him!"

"Comyn, Duke of Kincardine," Blair Hamley replied, and it was evident from the dangerous dilation of his eyes, and from the ominous movement of his hands, that he controlled himself with the utmost difficulty, "you are rash and intemperate in your judgments, untrue, ungenerous, ungentlemanly, unchivalrous——"

"Out on you, accursed priest!" savagely and furiously the Duke retorted. "Your own parish repudiates you, and complaints are being forwarded to your ecclesiastical superiors, and you have brought upon your infamous head the reproaches and curses of a wronged and despairing father. You are a whited sepulchre, whom every righteous man must scorn and spit on."

The coarse act followed the coarse word, and instantaneously the huge form of Blair Hamley towered above the Duke, taller and more commanding than ever, his great arms rose above his head, and it seemed as if he would fall on his tormentor and crush him. For a moment he swayed to and fro, as Sampson may have done when preparing to pull down the Philistine's house, and then by a supreme and almost superhuman effort, remembering himself and his office, and white as a sheeted corpse, he drew back, and folding his arms over his breast murmured softly:

"Then did they spit in His face and buffet Him: and some smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, Thou Christ, who is he that struck Thee?"

With head sunken on his breast, and as one who had been partially stunned, whose eyes could no more endure the light, not even the ghostly rays of a poor street lamp, Blair Hamley shrank back into the shadow of the street, and was powerless to go farther; while the Red Comyn, now that the giant had not felled him to the

Digitized by Google

ground, turned away, and too excited to realize that he was retracing his steps, moved into the full glare of the public house. As he advanced, big Jo, the dosser, who had been evading the police ever since his murderous attack on his partner in the "doubles," and whose coming to Squirries Street had been wholly unpremeditated, saw him distinctly, and recalling his interference and the unsatisfactory struggle of the morning, rushed onward to meet him, and almost before he could realize his situation, dealt him a succession of savage blows. The Duke reeled, tried to hit back and to parry the blows that came fast and furious, but his wounded hand placed him at a disadvantage. He cried for help, for the police, but the more he cried the more terrible became the punishment Jo inflicted.

Two or three half-drunken men from the public house looked on rather approvingly than otherwise, and it was not until the Duke had swooned and lay helpless on the ground, and his burly antagonist was kicking him, that deliverance came from an unexpected quarter.

Roused from the stupour into which he had been plunged by the obloquy heaped upon him by his former friend, Blair Hamley, hearing the noise and the loud calls for succour, rushed like a suddenly released tornado upon the inhuman victor, and grasping him in his herculean arms lifted him off his feet and hurled him as easily as the trained athlete throws the hammer almost across the narrow street. Down came the big dosser with a sickening thud, and there he lay senseless and bleeding. The few spectators, fearful of being incriminated by the brawl, sought refuge in the public house, and Blair Hamley was left alone, standing by the unconscious Duke and flashing defiance from his blazing eyes. What should he do? The Red Comyn could not be left there in his precarious condition. Remove him to a hospital, and all the sad story of their alienation would come out, and one whose reputation was dearer to him than his own would be ruined. That should not be. At any cost that must be averted.

Digitized by Google

There was only one course that appealed to him as practical. He raised the Duke in his arms, and strode forwards rapidly and as easily as though he bore no burden, and made for Ivernia Cottage. The gate he pushed open with his foot, and the door of the house also yielded to his touch. Foyle Shane looked as though a ghost had suddenly appeared in his path, when he saw the priest bearing the insensible and bleeding form of a workman. Blair Hamley spoke hurriedly and excitedly, overcame all objections and remonstrances, insisted that the sufferer must be cared for, that he himself would provide a physician, and that he would see the reluctant host more than compensated for his trouble. Thus urged and appealed to, Shane not only consented, but assisted the clergyman to bear the Red Comyn to an upper chamber not far from the one occupied by Fiona and Lena. There they did what they could for his immediate relief. As Shane removed his garments, he slipped his hand into an inviting pocket and unobserved drew out several sovereigns which he quietly transferred to his own, and in executing this feat his honest face assumed an expression of more than ordinary virtue.

A pathetic wail from the chamber beneath diverted the attention of the men from their work of mercy. The low piteous cry explained itself. At last death had completed its victory; only the worn, wasted, withered body remained. The aged and forlorn mother was dead. When Blair Hamley and Shane entered the room, the corpse lay partially uncovered, its grizzly hair spread over a soiled pillow, the eyes were staring wide open, and by the side of the bed, crouched on the floor in an agony of terror, the feeble-minded daughter moaned and groaned. The priest made the sign of the cross, reverently drew the stained, grimy sheet over the face of the dead, and softly repeated: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Then he knelt and silently prayed for the living.

Before the devout "Amen" was reached he was startled from his supplications by a piercing shriek, which

Digitized by Google

rose above his head and filled the house with its fearful echo. In a second he was on his feet, and followed by Shane dashed up the stairway and pushed his way into the apartment where he had left the prostrate and unconscious Duke. There still lay the Duke, helpless, immovable, but partly stretched over him, as if in the act of attempting to raise him up, a young woman in a swoon was dimly visible in the flare of the sickly candles. Blair Hamley understood at a glance. Roused by the wail for the departed, Fiona, on crossing the hall towards the stairs, had seen through the open door the form of one who seemed dead, and on entering had discovered, notwithstanding his disfigured face, now that his head was uncovered, the man she loved, and with one wild cry of despairing grief had fainted while trying to win him back to life on her own bosom.

Digitized by Google

XVIII

TINA QUACO BECOMES A LADY OF QUALITY

RESPECTABILITY agreed with Laissina Quaco. She flourished in its balmy atmosphere and reposed amiably in its decorous comfort. The few days she had spent at Lancaster Gate had fully reconciled her to the change she had made in her manner of life. She had already come to feel a pride in her own gentility and a correspondingly smug horror of everything and every one disreputable.

She had been able to gain the approval of her employer by the efficient management of the household, and when the Master of Rowallan with scrupulous politeness issued his directions for the day, and when Naoroji bowed obsequiously before her and called her Sahibah, her self-complacency was complete. Her condition was actually beatific in comparison with what it had been, and the nimbus of respectability almost canonized her in her own esteem. Yet she was not satisfied. Even her ointment was not beyond the intrusion of the proverbially ill-mannered fly.

Her happiness was clouded and her peace disturbed by the attentions bestowed by the Master of Rowallan on a famous actress, recently returned from the antipodes, whose impersonation in a dramatization of *Les Miserables* was exciting enthusiastic encomiums in the London daily press. From the expensive flowers he sent to the popular favourite, from the perfumed notes, from the late hours he kept, presumably in her company, and from the frequent absence of his carriage on unexplained errands, though evidently not on errands of mercy, it was not difficult to make out that he was a victim to the reigning infatuation. He was not in the least careful to conceal

Digitized by Google

from prying eyes his rapturous passion for this woman, this Thalia Thesperius, whose name sounded strangely familiar to Laissina Quaco, and whom she could not refrain from connecting with an actress sadly conspicuous in the never-to-be-forgotten Buenos Ayres tragedy.

One morning late in November, while she was brooding over the possible influence of this actress on her own future, she was painfully disconcerted, on entering the master's breakfast room for the purpose of receiving orders, to find him sitting before his untasted meal, holding an open letter in his hand looking the picture of irremediable desolation. With only half a curtsy, she hastily approached him, and inquired whether she could help him.

"No," he replied impetuously and with brutal abruptness, "no, get out; you trouble me. What could you do to avert the loss of a million pounds?"

"I don't know, sir. Perhaps nothing; but I want you to understand that I'd do anything in my power for you." The words were spoken without the least quaver or waver in her voice, and, notwithstanding her dismission, she maintained her ground and waited. He answered with a bitter laugh, and then in a frenzied way exclaimed: "Can I bring back the dead? Can I regain or find the lost? Here my sister writes that one Pitsligo Tysford has brought from Australia a million pounds bequeathed by a deceased brother for the woman who was my wife!"

"Truly your wife, sir?" suddenly and sharply interjected Laissina. "Truly?"

"Yes," he continued passionately, "and she abandoned me for another man and took with her the child—her child, and," as with some misgiving, "mine. And now I am asked to produce her or her offspring—or this vast sum of money must be diverted into other channels. Such a loss, such a loss!" and he almost wept for rage and mortification. "Who could have thought of such a calamity as this? A million pounds, a sum that would be a godsend at this very hour." And then, recklessly,

Digitized by Google

his voice growing louder: "Just to think of it, these precious thousands to slip through my fingers!

"But shall I abandon them to some commonplace charity which only maintains a long list of officers in idleness who ought to be at work, or to some vulgar, grinning distant relative? No; they are mine. I will have them. I will appeal to the law! I am not to blame if these women cannot be found! The gold I will have, as husband and father I have a right to it, and no man or devil shall rob me."

Laissina Quaco, after this paroxysm of frenzy and this self-betrayal, overcame her hesitancy, drew nearer to the excited man, and with a composure that brought him partially to his senses, observed: "You'll rouse the house, sir, and bring the servants on you, if you talk in this loud way. Hush, and think—there may be a way out of the muddle, and even I may be able to help you. Only don't go to raving like a madman."

Her firmness, her boldness in addressing him, her undeviating respect, and her common sense soothed the Master of Rowallan in no small degree.

"I wouldn't, sir, take on in this way," she continued demurely, "you'll hurt yourself. A notice in the papers might lead to the discovery of your family." This was said cautiously, almost stealthily, as a soft-pawed cat approaches the forbidden milk, and the frown given by Rowallan in reply, convinced her, as she suspected, that he was not anxious for a domestic reunion. In the same velvety tone of voice, as though she had not noticed his impatient scowl, she added, "Or why don't you get a daughter, one could be had for a little cash?"

The proposal was uttered without any emotion, just as she might have suggested a trip to Margate, or have asked for the most ordinary favour. Nor is it probable that she would have ventured to hint at such a thing, had she not known the man to whom she spoke, and knew from all that she had learned about him at Buenos Ayres that he was never over-scrupulous.

The Master of Rowallan gazed at her in a bewildered

Digitized by Google

way and replied: "Buy a daughter! You are ingenious and inventive, Mistress Quaco; but what young woman of twenty could I find who would lend herself to such a fraud?"

"If you'll only trust me, I can find the girl, and can manage the affair so that you'll have hold of the million before Christmas."

"You! who is she?"

"My own daughter!"

"What! your daughter! And is her father living?"

"No, he's been dead these many years, and she knows nothing of him or of her birth. Indeed, for that matter, she has only a slight acquaintance with her mother. She's been taught in a country school, and is now out at service in this city. She's a well-behaved girl, and," spoken with impressive emphasis, "is thoroughly respectable."

The Master of Rowallan was not slow to grasp the feasibility and possibilities of the project, and in spite of its shady character, was not indisposed to adopt it as his own. He meditated, reflected, and in silence tried to follow the plot into all of its conceivable ramifications and consequences. In other circumstances he might have rejected the seductive strategy of the temptress and turned her bag and baggage into the street; but, as he argued, his position was not such that he could afford to be independent and extravagantly virtuous. It humiliated him to think that he would be hampered in coming years by this girl who would be able to demand from him the protection due a daughter, and by this coarse, conscienceless creature who would have it in her power to annoy him and intimidate him.

As he revolved in his mind all the contingencies, however, he saw that there might be a way of deliverance even from this thraldom. At the worst, the teachings of Don Jorge Avecomus might be revived with profit, and glasses of creme de menthe served as a chasse café might come in handy. He smiled a sinister smile, and Mrs. Quaco, whose eyes took in every change of his

Digitized by Google

countenance, shivered a bit; for by a strange coincidence she too was thinking of Jorge Avecomus and of the convenient disappearance of his guests. At last he broke the silence, and slowly, as though weighing all chances, said:

"I must confess that your suggestion is not without its attractions, and yet it is encompassed by difficulties, serious and perhaps insurmountable difficulties. But doubtless these may be overcome. Still there is one thing you have forgotten to state; on what terms do you offer your services in this hazardous venture?"

Mrs. Quaco realized that her game was won, and that her ascendency over this man was more than begun. She heaved a sigh of relief, and composedly, though with no rudeness in her bearing, took a chair and seated herself as she answered:

"I had no intention of bargaining with you, sir. You're a gentleman, and I'm sure you'll do what's right. But you ask a straight question, and I'm not the one to say as how you shouldn't have a straight reply. My share ought to be £20,000, and you ought to settle on Tina £100,000. Think, sir, on the tremendous fortune that leaves you!"

The sinister smile returned, and the master played with a paper knife. He seemed to be amused, and there was just a touch of derision in his voice. "Reasonable enough," he said, "reasonable enough. But, Mrs. Quaco, what security would you have after I had come into possession of the million that I would fulfill my promise?"

"You wouldn't dare not to, sir. If you did, I'd—there, it's not for the likes of me to say what I'd do. You know, sir, when I came to you I told you as how I wanted to be respectable, and that's what I'm working for. If Tina has this money, and I have mine, we can leave you, sir, and leave London, and go to the provinces or to America, and we'll be respectable sure enough then; for you know, sir," she added sagely and with the deepest conviction, "£120,000 are quite enough to prove any one's respectability in England or the States."

Digitized by Google

An hour after this conversation closed a dispatch was sent to Scotland and Mrs. Quaco issued her mandates to the domestics in an unusually imperative style. A change all at once had come over her. She was no longer as forbearing as she had been. Every servant was made to feel by some tart reproof, by some stinging reprimand, and in one instance, by a smart slap administered to a careless, recusant scullion girl, that in a new sense she was absolute mistress of the household.

She had her personal effects removed from the lowly chamber under the eaves of the palatial residence to one more advantageously situated and more becoming her dignity, and she made it to be understood that hereafter one of the maids must always be ready to wait on her as promptly as she would on the master himself. To such lofty heights did Mrs. Laissina Quaco's new-found respectability carry her. It was the most natural thing in the world to her for respectability to assert itself in brag, bluster, and in waspish assumptions of superiority. She was only beginning to revel in the delights attending on the renovation of her damaged reputation; and when she took her seat in the carriage with Naoroji on the box, and directed that she be driven to Gower Street, she wondered whether it might not be possible for her to thrust out of her path this notorious actress and confirm her new social position by a matrimonial alliance with the Master of Rowallan. Unhappily, as she giggled in her exultant expectation, the pale face of Zinnia Youtsay rose before her.

"Pshaw," she said to herself, "there's no likelihood that she could ever know, and even if she did what harm could she do? She has two living husbands herself!" And Mrs. Quaco put away the skeleton that had dared to obtrude on her anticipated nuptial feast.

In response to Mrs. Quaco's knock and ring, Tina herself, as slip-shod, slovenly and smudged as ever, opened the door and received her mother with a startled and dubious "Ooh!" Unhesitatingly, and with the confident assurance eminent respectability imparts, Mrs. Quaco

Digitized by Google

marched into the reception-room, and without any preliminary explanations commanded her daughter to summon Mrs. Gowanlock, and prepare on the instant to forsake that worthy female for the home and affection of her father.

"Father!" exclaimed the astounded housemaid, as she gave her uncertain dress a jerk to keep it from slipping off. "Why, I always supposed father was dead!"

"It makes no difference what you've supposed. He's alive now and don't forget it. That's his carriage and horses. He's rich, and he wants you and you must go with me at once."

"His carriage," replied Tina, glancing through the window, "why, that 'ere carriage has been here afore——often—for the actress and Mam'selle Pierette to ride out in fer their 'ealth."

"Very likely," replied Mrs. Quaco imperiously, "but after we leave I'll take good care that it is not disgraced again by the touch of these women."

"Ooh!"

"Why are you standing with your mouth open like a little fool, as you are? The news I bring you fancy is too good to be true, eh? Says I, before I started, says I to myself, 'this child of mine won't believe her own parent.'"

"No, mother, I was only wondering what has come over you. Your cheeks are not as red as they used to be, and what have you done with your fine gown and ribbons? Have you been sick?" And the poor girl uttered a distressful "Ooh!" as though she had painful visions of her maternal parent tossing fever-stricken in a pauper hospital.

"Nonsense," replied the unsentimental, matter-of-fact Mrs. Quaco, "I'm well enough; and as for my clothes,—that's none of your affair. Get along and do what I told you."

Before Tina could start on her errand, however, a shrill voice over the bannisters demanded why she had not informed Madam Thesperius that her gentleman's carriage

Digitized by Google

was waiting for her at the door. This announcement roused the ire of Mrs. Quaco and she moved into the hall and looked up stormfully at Mrs. Gowanlock. Mrs. Gowanlock glared at her from the first landing, and poor Tina seeing the two women face to face hastened up the back stairs and gathered together her chief belongings.

"I would have you understand, madam," began the bristling Mrs. Quaco, "that there carriage belongs to the honourable Master of Rowallan, and he's sent to fetch his daughter home and not any circus riders or players."

Nancy Gowanlock was not in an amiable mood on this particular day. She likewise had received disconcerting news from Eskburgh, and had been bracing herself up on divers portions of gin and water, with the result that her brain was a trifle obfusticated and her temper was more than a trifle ruffled.

"What do you want here, woman, I'd like to know? Get out at once, or I'll call the police." Such was her uncompromising and uncivil reply to Mrs. Quaco's aggravating speech.

"I'll not budge an inch till my daughter goes with me."

"Your daughter! and who may she be? Madam Thesperius or Mam'selle Pierette——?"

"Neither, you insulting creature. I would have you know that your actress is as old as I am, and as for Pierette Charmartan—never mind, I won't say what I think of her."

"Say on," retorted Nancy Gowanlock, her brow knit, and looking as black as thunder, and growling like one of the Eumenides, "why don't you say on? Do you insinuate that I, I who have seen better days, have let my lodgings to improper characters?" Here the lachrymose quality of the gin became irresistible, and she began to weep. "I never was so insulted in my life, and by a great hulking female who isn't fit to black my shoes."

"Female, yourself," sputtered the exasperated Mrs. Quaco. "I don't care who lives in your house as long as I get my Tina away."

Digitized by Google

"There, now, off with you. You are either drunk or crazy; for that tiresome chit of a girl is called Quaco and not Rowallan, and can't be your child unless you're his wife—and that you ain't, for Madam Thesperius says his wife's dead."

"I'm not bound to give an account of myself to you, and that play-acting woman had better hold her vile tongue." As Mrs. Quaco was spitefully spitting out her wrath, the cause of the altercation arrived by the way she had departed, holding a bundle in her arms, which she found difficulty in carrying on account of the frantic efforts she had to make to keep her hat on her head and her dress and shawl on her shoulders.

When Mrs. Gowanlock saw her thus prepared for flight, she screamed at her: "Put those things down and stay where you are, you ungrateful hussy. I'll take the law on you! You shan't leave without giving me a month's warning, and I'll pay you out for this before the month ends, and send you packing by the ears without a character."

"Ooh!" cried the thoroughly frightened Tina, and she hesitated. But Mrs. Quaco was equal to the situation.

"Character! You mean old withered scold, you'll be wanting one from her before she ever asks you for one. Get on with you, Tina, there's your father's carriage; step in and take a seat." The girl hurriedly obeyed, and her mother continued, addressing the now speechless Gowanlock: "You'll take the law on her, will you? I'd like to see you do it. Where's her wages? But there! We don't want your dirty money. And when I'm gone, remember, you've had one respectable woman beneath your roof, if you never have another."

Out she paraded with a strut and bounce, banging the house door after her, while the discomfited Gowanlock followed her with a shriek, and moved as though she would cast herself over the bannisters, but, on second thought, plunged into her private room, and swallowing a huge glass of gin, sat down on the floor and screamed

Digitized by Google

and screamed. As the lodgers were out, and the Sergeant yet in Scotland, or just arriving in London, no one heard her, and therefore she rose again, took another sip and lay down to raddled and inebrious dreams.

As the carriage of the Master of Rowallan headed for Marshall Snellgrove's, Laissina Quaco gave Tina precise instructions for her guidance under the changed conditions of her life.

"You'll find your father a hard, proud man, and it's better not to ask questions. Just take everything for granted, and let him tell you as much as he pleases to tell. Be discreet, and don't chatter, and if any one tries to pump you, send them to your father or to me. Another thing, don't you go and keep calling me mother. I'm to be to you plain Mrs. Quaco, but you'll know all about it by Christmas, or soon after. Your father married me a long while ago, and his family was opposed to the match, and as there's lots of money at stake he don't want to run any risk. But it will all be settled in a few weeks, and then it won't make no difference what nobody says."

These directions and admonitions were spoken as though veracious in every phase of their meaning, but they were all a maze and a haze, to poor unsophisticated Tina, who could only look blank while she murmured, "Ooh!"

Naoroji opened the door of the carriage and mother and daughter entered the great ladies' furnishing house of Marshall Snellgrove. Mrs. Quaco knew exactly what she wanted, and she went about the business in a very fussy and peremptory manner. Nothing less than an entire outfit was to be purchased, and the obstacles in the way were neither few nor slight.

First of all it was not easy to convince the saleswoman, a tall, thin, supercilious personage, with an abundance of fluffy hair, and a superabundance of train considerately sweeping the floor as she moved, that her customer either really desired or could pay for the articles she enumerated. Moreover, after some caustic remarks and the display of a well-filled purse had secured for

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Quaco more consideration, a fresh embarrassment arose from the almost impossible task of fitting garments to the shapeless figure of Miss Tina. Everything put on slipped, or hung so precariously that the least freedom of motion jeopardized its security. Pinning, padding, stitching accomplished something, but the total result was not encouraging.

Still, at last, the wardrobe was chosen, final directions given and the bills paid. A simple hat was selected to replace the unsightly one Tina had worn, and a handsome cloak was thrown around her, very much to the improvement of her appearance. Some of her childish whims for ornaments were humoured; but when she desired to buy sachet powders fragrant with musk, her mother strenuously opposed, curiously intimating that they were not compatible with a first-rate specimen of female respectability.

While Mrs. Quaco was ardently engaged in shopping an interesting, if not an agreeable, surprise was in store for her on her return to Lancaster Gate. The grandiose and florid Jabez Pinchover had prevailed on the inscrutable Mitchie Carfrae to undertake an important mission from himself to the Master of Rowallan. "Prevail" is the correct term to employ in this connection, for the chief and confidential clerk had dodged and palavered in most extraordinary fashion to escape the performance of this highly honourable service.

Memories of Charmartan's and of billiards indisposed him to meet the Master of Rowallan. But on second thought, it occurred to him that he had means of retaliation in his own hands. The master would not care to have it known that he, now in a position of trust, had ever been a frequenter of Charmartan's, and had practically cheated at play; neither would he be so rash as to provoke a quarrel which might end in the British public being enlightened on his equivocal career in Buenos Ayres. Mitchie also reflected that after all he might escape discovery. The master might never associate him with the delinquent clerk. Still, should these calcu-

Digitized by Google

lations miscarry, and he be compelled to fight, he was sure he held the trump card which would bankrupt his opponent in character and fortune.

The Master of Rowallan was at home, although it was late in the day. Carfrae did not send up his name, but requested to be announced simply as a representative of "The Sovereign Steamship Company, Limited." He was shown into the study where the master, already in evening dress, was indulging in a cigarette and a French novel. On entering the room Mitchie Carfrae, with scrupulous humility stood aloof, and, in subdued tones, explained, while apologizing for his intrusion:

"I trust you'll excuse me, sir, for coming to you after business hours, but Mr. Pinchover insisted that I should try to see you."

"But, why on earth did he not come himself?" The smoke was scientifically emitted, and through the smoke Rowallan scanned the face of his visitor.

"I don't know, unless a meeting of our directors prevented. But he has instructed me to say that he has written you several important letters which have remained unanswered, and has called at the office of 'The Emancipator Mining and Building Company, Limited,' on successive days, but has not been so happy as to find you there."

Rowallan winced behind the smoke, for he remembered the many hours he had given of late to the charming society of Madam Thalia Thesperius. His infatuation had made him neglectful of his business. He replied, however, with his usual self-composure: "Say to Mr. Pinchover that I have been away from the city, and have not read his letters. Tell him I will do so to-morrow and will be obliged if he will call at my office in the forenoon after ten o'clock."

"Thank you, sir, I'll so report. Good-evening, sir," and Mitchie, much relieved, was beginning to bow himself out.

"Stop a minute. You seem like an intelligent young man. Have you any idea what it is that makes the

Digitized by Google

governor—I believe you clerks call him governor?—so very anxious to see me?"

"He hasn't told me, sir."

"But a sharp fellow like you must have guessed."

"Well, sir, I won't deny that I've heard some things, and that I've put two and two together; but then you know I can't be sure, and it's none of my affair, sir."

"Not sure that two and two make four?" More smoke and closer scrutiny.

"You are so kind, sir, that I am willing to tell you what I've heard, but I rely on you not to tell Mr. Pinchover that I've been talking, and then, I'm not sure that what I've heard or seen has any bearing on the letters you've failed to read."

"Be quite at ease, I never would think of betraying you."

"Well, sir, it is just like this. During the past week the man who has the contract for the erection and furnishing of the mammoth hotel you are building on the Thames Embankment in the name of the Emancipator Company has been trying to find you, and failing he has been at our office complaining to the governor that you're so far behind in payments on the work that the men threaten to strike, and that if relief don't come within a week, he himself will be insolvent, and he fears that his insolvency will produce a dangerous crisis in the affairs of the company and may lead to a panic."

"What else?" inquired Rowallan, as he tossed aside a half-consumed cigarette, and began to chew the end of an unlit cigar.

"I heard, also, the contractor is the more uneasy because he has been unable to discover the whereabouts of the president of the company, the Duke of Kincardine."

"The Duke? What has become of him?"

"No one knows, sir. He vacated his town residence a few days ago, as he's rented it for the season to a wealthy gentleman from Australia, and he's not been seen since. He's not been at the clubs. His body-

Digitized by Google

servant professes to be ignorant of his abode; and he's not been at our office lately, not indeed since he came to ask questions about a young lady who has also disappeared mysteriously."

"So, so, there's a woman in the case!" exclaimed Rowallan. "Probably she could inform the anxious contractor to what bower of love his Grace has flown."

"No, sir; the very morning before he himself went away, his lordship stoutly denied in my presence being in any way responsible for the disappearance of the young lady."

"Did he? What else would you have had him do? Lovers are not bound to tell the truth to all comers. But it is too bad that his folly and my own thoughtlessness should have raised these unwarranted and uncomfortable fears which you report. They are utterly without foundation."

"I am glad to hear it, sir," answered Mitchie politely.

"Oh, yes, quite groundless, quite. Why, I have the authority of Mr. Pinchover himself for the assurance that this wealthy Australian is fully prepared to stand behind the financial responsibilities of our company. I wonder why he did not tell the contractors this!"

"I wonder!" echoed Mr. Carfrae mechanically.

Something in the voice, something in the face, unnoticed before, acted suddenly and efficaciously as a quickening tonic on the memory of Rowallan, and he, who from the first had been furtively studying his visitor, now identified him as the young man whom he had so dextrously fleeced at Charmartan's. His first impulse was to tell him right out that he was known, but, then, as the young man evidently had not recognized him, why open a subject which, if pressed would unquestionably compromise himself? Prudence prevailed. He knew the clerk, but the clerk had not suspected him or his identity, and thus the advantage was so distinctly his, he would not throw it away by unnecessary disclosures.

The time might come when he might need a spy and a conscienceless tool, and if so, this loose liver, this fre-

Digitized by Google

quenter of Charmartan's and of the Leicester Square purlieus, who gambled with money he could hardly have obtained honestly, would be the very one to serve a nefarious purpose. Without betraying by sign or manner what thus passed through his mind as rapidly as a wireless telegram through the air, the Master of Rowallan expressed the hope that Mr. Pinchover's intelligent representative would do what he could to contradict the disquieting rumours concerning the financial soundness of "The Emancipator Company, Limited," and he closed his temperate and well-balanced appeal with the words:

"And I may be able to show my appreciation of your interest in the matter by speaking a good word for you to Mr. Pinchover, or it may be that I can offer you something very much to your advantage in a few days; and in case I desire you to call tell me what is your name?"

"My name, sir,"—falteringly spoken—"is Mitchie Carfrae."

Rowallan did change colour when he heard it, did bite his cigar in two, did twitch his mouth, did frown ominously, and did half rise from his chair, but before he could speak a servant appeared and announced:

"The carriage has returned with Mrs. Quaco and Miss Rowallan, and they wait for you, if you please, sir, in the drawing-room."

The storm was averted by this interruption. What Rowallan might have said under the strong feelings excited by recollections associated with this hated name, no one ever knew, perhaps not even himself. He speedily realized how unwise any exhibition of bitterness and anger would be in the circumstances—and was silent. This young man was not to blame for his father's disreputable conduct—and then the Carfrae he had known might not have been related to him in any way. Nevertheless, he was in no mood to exchange further civilities, and with a careless nod he dismissed Mitchie and said to the domestic:

"Say to the ladies"—ah! Mrs. Quaco, what a blissful triumph—"that I will see Miss Rowallan after she has

Digitized by Google

had time to rest. And bring me here a cup of coffee and a glass of brandy—I have a furious headache."

Mitchie Carfrae descended the great stairs reflecting on what had just occurred. He had observed the change wrought in the countenance and manner of Rowallan at the mention of his name, and swiftly drew inferences therefrom not overflattering to the memory of his deceased and not much-lamented parent. He had no idea, however, that he had been identified as the young man who had formerly enjoyed himself so much at Charmartan's. As he was congratulating himself on his escape from detection, a voice hailed him and a woman laid her hand upon his shoulder. She had stepped into the hallway and effectually hid by her own bulky person the form of a young girl, who timidly had sought refuge in the spacious comfort of a downy chair.

"Why, Mrs. Quaco, is that you?"

"Yes, it's just me," and without apology she pushed him across the hall into a reception-room on the other side, and after drawing the portières, inquired sharply: "And what brought you here, Mitchie Carfrae?"

"None of your business, old girl," he curtly replied. She flushed with anger, particularly at his failure to recognize the progress she had made in respectability.

"There, now," he continued soothingly, "don't look that way, and don't fly into a rage. Remember how brutally you treated me the other night. But I don't bear malice. Let's forgive and forget." He quite won her by his oily speech and by his bearing, and when he related how he came to be there and what had passed between him and the master, he relieved her mind from painful suspicion and reestablished himself in her favour. She said:

"I'm sure when he has time to think it over, the master will do you no harm, or bear a grudge against you on account of your name. And then, you know, I'm here, and may be able to help you. I've been good to you, Mitchie, for your father's sake, as he was once much to me, however badly he treated me afterwards, and I mean

Digitized by Google

to be good to you still, if I can and you'll let me. But you must go now. But there is one thing I want to say, Mitchie."

"Well, say on."

"If you should come here again and see Miss Rowallan, don't speak to her till you are introduced."

"Of course not, why should I?"

"No matter—only promise."

"But I thought you told me when we last met that the wife of the Master of Rowallan had left him and carried his child away with her."

"Did I tell you all that?" dubiously inquired Mrs. Quaco. "Well, I oughtn't to have rambled on in that way. I can't explain now. The child has grown up, and the father has found her and owns her. But there, the flunkey is coming; good-bye."

She drew aside the portières and accompanied Mitchie Carfrae to the street door, carefully keeping herself between him and the drawing-room as he passed through the hall. Then she returned to Tina, who had in the meanwhile received Rowallan's message, and the two women ascended to their rooms. Mrs. Quaco handed her daughter over to the attentions of a maid, while she sought the retirement of her own chamber. She had partly undressed herself and was reclining comfortably on a sofa, when a domestic knocked at the door, entered, and gave her a letter. When once more by herself, she broke the seal and read: "In heaven's name, what is the meaning of the enclosed? Rowallan." Hurriedly she opened another note contained within the first, and perused it:

"I've just returned from rehearsal, and learn that a coarse, large, vulgar woman has been here and represented herself to be your wife, and has carried off with her a silly chit of a house-maid whom she claims to be your daughter. I'm incensed in every fibre of my being. You always told me that your wife was a lady, and that she had deserted you and probably was dead. I wouldn't attach any importance to what has taken place, were it

Digitized by Google

not that the horrid woman came and went in your carriage. Explain, or nevermore call me your own and beloved: Thalia Thesperius."

Mrs. Quaco gasped for breath, and overlooking the complications to which this communication might give rise in her relations with Rowallan, yielded to the fury that possessed her, and exclaimed, while shaking her clenched fists in the direction of Gower Street: "I defy her. A horrid woman, am I? See if I don't scratch your face for you, and tear your wretched finery off your back, and make you rue your words! I'm coarse and vulgar, am I? Well, I'll be coarse enough with you when I get my hands on you. And this creature thinks she will yet marry the Master of Rowallan! Not if I know it; and I think I do. Here, you vile traipsing thing of a play actor, I give you warning, you shan't have him. I'll kill him and you too, rather than you shall call him husband. He's mine, and I'll keep him, so help me God, and in spite of your spangles, your paint and your theatre ways I'll make him marry me!"

She stood for a few minutes livid with rage and swaying to and fro with passion—and then, from sheer exhaustion and impotent anger she sank on the bed and gave way to tears.

Digitized by Google

XIX

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A MILLIONAIRE

WHEN Pitsligo Tysford alighted from the railroad carriage at Euston he was effusively and magniloquently greeted by the vivacious Pinchover, who, with flower in buttonhole, glove in hand, and the most elaborate of his mercantile smiles, stood waiting for him on the platform, his better half still illusively arrayed in an inexistent and supposititious body, supporting him on his right, while his gossamer daughter rendered him like service on the left. This incarnate trilogy of bounce, inanity, and vanity had been increased by the arrival of Powrie Rowallan, who had come for the express purpose of meeting his sister on her return from Scotland.

The master was manifestly out of sorts. He was only formally courteous to his companions; was absent-minded and indisposed to be bored by the loquacious oratory of his spectacular friend. His unamiable mood was due in no small measure to the mortifying collision that had taken place between him and Mrs. Quaco; for after his outburst of resentment against that eminently respectable female for her presumption, he had found himself compelled to come to terms with her, and even to promise her that he would gradually break off his intimacy with the dazzling Thalia Thesperius. As soon as he had weakened in the slightest degree, his housekeeper was sure that she had the upper hand, and she did not withhold the lash. After the explosion she swooped down on him, and as he fluttered before her threats, she fastened her claws into his soul, and almost shrieked in his ear her identity.

She reminded him of Buenos Ayres, of Jorge Ave-

Digitized by Google

comus, of his wife and of herself, then a slip of a girl, who had served in his family, and who had come to her misery through what she had observed there, and through temptations to which she was there exposed. It was not in her heart to spare him. Rendered hard, cold and cruel by her wretched life, now that she had a man in her power she gloated over the torture she was able to inflict. She declared that she would publish all that she knew about him, would expose his present scheme to impose on the millionaire, would blight his reputation and have him expelled from decent society, unless he changed his manner towards her and showed her the respect due to a lady.

During her excited harangue she had degraded him yet farther by adopting a tone of impudent familiarity. She no longer addressed him as the Master of Rowallan, or as the master, but simply as Powrie, though he was old enough to be her father. He was her equal, not her superior, and she experienced an intoxicating thrill of delight as she made him feel that he was being trampled beneath her feet.

Cunning and vindictiveness, however, came to his relief even in his abasement. He submitted to the tyrant as best he could, mollified her by flattery and lulled her by alluring promises. All he needed was time, time to gain possession of the wealth that lay so near his grasp, time to wind up the affairs of the Emancipator Company without a scandal; and then he would get even with this headstrong and dangerous woman. He would make her pay for her presumption, and pay dearly.

Never had he felt so intent on revenge, and the more deeply he felt the more careful he was to disguise his bitterness and hatred. Hostilities were brought to an end by concessions, compromises, vows of fidelity, and the next morning when Mrs. Quaco brought the timid Tina, arrayed in a handsome gown, down to breakfast, she herself took the head of the table. But as she presided she did not observe the suggestion of derision

Digitized by Google

in the voice of Naoroji as he called her "Sahibah," nor the frown which darkened the face of Powrie behind his newspaper.

That frown had beclouded his whole day, and it had only been intensified by what had taken place between him and the Board of Directors representing the corporate interests of the "Emancipator Mining and Building Company, Limited." The Master of Rowallan who was to all intents and purposes its controlling genius, had been called to account that very day because of disquieting rumours regarding its solvency. The meeting had been a stormy one. Some of the gentlemen had demanded an investigation, and all of them, who heretofore had let things drift, and who had taken no interest in the fate of the small investors, had become alarmed and anxious when their own holdings might be imperilled, and when they might be held responsible by the public for funds which had been entrusted to their care. Rowallan in some degree allayed their fears by explaining that the money tied up in South American mines would in a little while yield a handsome dividend, and that the failure to meet maturing liabilities on the hotel, which when complete would prove a veritable bank, was due solely to the delay in realizing on these more distant ventures, and to a general decline in securities, due to the war in South Africa. His statements produced an excellent effect on the meeting. The directors smiled once more.

All of these gentlemen had been admitted to the "ground flour" of this comprehensive wealth-creating scheme. Their shares had cost them very little, and some of them had paid never a penny into the treasury, and had felt that the use of their honourable names was more than an equivalent for the stock they had received. It would be unfair to say that they had joined themselves together for the avowed purpose of swindling the public. The majority were irreproachable men, as the term is understood in the mercantile world. They had seen an easy way of making several thousands and

Digitized by Google

they had not been over-careful in looking into the details of organization and management.

Jabez Pinchover, for instance, had no thought of defrauding the community. He had a character to lose, and he had a wholesome dread of folding his peacock plumes within the dark enclosure of a prison. Not that he hesitated to take legitimate advantage in trade of the necessities and weaknesses of others, and not that he was unwilling to adopt the conventional rogueries of business for his own profit, and, in extreme cases, compound with his conscience by consecrating a reasonable part of his earnings to the propagation of the gospel. But a wholesale and retail robbery—a species of burglarious assault on the property of others,—a commercial form of housebreaking—was not to his taste, and he was self-convinced that he could not be entrapped into any such felony. He had been drawn into the company, like others, by a generous gift of shares, he had purchased additional shares at a very moderate rate, and he had received a lavish commission on all that he had sold. So far as he had laid out any plan of action, he intended to earn large commissions as long as a bull market could be found. Then when a favourable opportunity presented and the stock was above par he purposed quietly to dispose of his holdings and, with a clear conscience and a full purse, retire to the amenities and delights of a well-spent life, and to official dignities in the nonconformist chapel where for many years he had zealously offered to the God of disinterestedness and love the peculiar incense acceptable to Mammon.

The meeting between Powrie and Pitsligo was strikingly cool and formal. They touched hands mechanically, bowed ceremoniously and abstained from everything, whether in word or manner, that looked like cordiality. Powrie could not understand his own aversion, and tried to account for it by the deception he was practicing on this venerable stranger, and which demanded on his part the greatest circumspection. Pitsligo was not at a loss to explain his own feelings.

Digitized by Google

At last he stood in the presence of the man who had deprived him of his good name, had robbed him of his fair Angelica, and had doomed him to the melancholy fate of a wanderer and a gatherer. Moreover, he had cursed the life of his sweet sister, Zinnia, had forced her to exile herself, as he had him, where she may miserably have perished in want and loneliness; and unless the Mistress of Rowallan had been misled by her own doubts, her brother at that moment was scheming to plunder the industrial classes. Pitsligo could not feel otherwise than he did, or overcome the natural repugnance of his heart for one who embodied the vices which were to him positively loathsome.

"I trust your daughter is well, and that I may soon have the pleasure of seeing her."

"Yes, thank you; Tina was never better. She is very retiring and has been so little in society that she may not impress you favourably. But we can't be too careful with our girls in a great city like this. A few months at a finishing school will doubtless overcome this diffidence and *gaucherie*."

As the little party moved along the platform to the first-class waiting room, where they were to tarry until Dick Gowanlock had cared for the luggage, the changed appearance of Pitsligo Tysford was observed and became the subject of whispered comment.

"What has come over him? How superb he looks. Who would have thought it!" the ecstatic and sentimental Olympia murmured in her waddling and panting mother's ear.

"Likely," Amaryllis answered in the same subdued tone, "some young woman in Scotland has ensnared him."

"Don't say that, mother, for you know Scotch girls are proverbially ugly, freckled, red-headed and unrefined creatures. More likely it is the memory of some English girl that has haunted him ever since he left Oak Hill Hall," and she sighed a sigh of sweet complacency.

"Who could it have been?" inquired Mrs. Pinchover

Digitized by Google

with expressive and uncomplimentary emphasis. "I believe none of your young friends visited us during his brief stay at the Hall."

"Mother, how provoking you are!"

While this whispered conversation was taking place, Powrie talked softly, and so as to be unheard by others, with his sister:

"Angelica, how came you to be so intimate with this stranger?"

"After I reached Eskburgh he came to the palace having liquidated a mortgage, and took possession on the authority of the Duke's solicitors."

"The Duke! And he has rented Kincardine's town house. Then he must know his Grace?"

"No, he says he never met him."

"What explanation does he give of his Quixotic conduct?"

"None. He is taciturn and does not invite inquiry into his private affairs."

"And you?"

"Me, why, I have not been impertinent. To me he has been polite, and would not hear to my leaving the palace on his account. And as the house is large enough for two people to live in apart, I decided not to fret him by declining his hospitality. And now he urges me to preside for him over the London establishment."

"And what do you propose to do?"

"What would you advise, Powrie?"

"Well, were you both younger I should fear some misconstruction of your motives, but you are too old for love to play any part in the arrangement, and I would accept were I in your place." He whispered what he said, and he did not notice that the venerable woman who walked by his side blushed to the roots of her silvery hair.

During this subdued chat Jabez Pinchover, who had monopolized Pitsligo, as some glittering archangel might, and was hurrying him along to the waiting room, overwhelmed him with a deluge of words.

Digitized by Google

"Gracious goodness, how long you stayed in Scotland. Famous place, Scotland, you know, famous for oat-cakes and haggis and whiskey and barelegged men and the bag-pipes, and other fascinating things, such as mist and fog and Presbyterians. And to think of your being with Miss Rowallan both going and returning. That's what I call remarkable. I never saw her before, though her clever brother has often spoken of the old lady" (Pitsligo cringed a bit) "in terms of the highest admiration. Fine woman he tells me. Looks after working girls and that sort of thing, and recovers wages for them and teaches them the way they should go. Altogether praiseworthy, you know, and Christian and motherly, and, and—well, you know what I mean. Ehem! I was glad to be introduced—and, as the Bible says, I think it is of the Virgin Mary, 'her works praise her in the gate.'

"But, to change the subject, you are going to be very lonely in your big London house. It was my Amaryllis, Mrs. Pinchover, you know; I usually call her Amaryllis, the name is so cooing and lovely—who first drew my attention to the awful size of the palace you are to live in, and who declared in that heroic and self-martyring way which is so becoming to her, 'Jabez, it shall not be. I cannot permit it. The good man shall not die of solitude. The servants will rob him, he will be starved or poisoned, unless some capable person looks after him. Husband, I am that person.

"'I know it is a great deal to expect from me, but I am ready to sacrifice my ease for the old gentleman who so gained on my esteem when he honoured our humble home with his presence. So don't dissuade me, Jabez, I have made up my mind, and if there is anything I pride myself on it is my mind. Mind is all that there is to me. All else is but the shadow of mortal thought. I know how a ducal establishment ought to be run, and you may say to delightful Mr. Tysford that in his age I will not abandon him to domestics and despair, but will consent to do, what I am certain he would never think of

Digitized by Google

asking—I will manage his London house for him as it ought to be managed, and for his solace and relaxation, and that the proprieties may be guarded, I will bring Olympia with me as my companion.' Was not this solicitude admirable, Mr. Tysford, and this thoughtfulness most timely and magnanimous?"

Mr. Pinchover, glowing all over with intense satisfaction that such disinterested devotion should have been born in the bosom of his family, where only, to tell the truth, he imagined it could be born, stopped for a moment to contemplate the pleasing effect his gushing announcement must have on Mr. Pitsligo Tysford. But that distressingly sluggish and unimpressionable nabob did not respond rapturously, and as though he regarded himself, in view of what was to be undertaken on his behalf by this glorious woman, who, according to her unanswerable philosophy, only consisted of "such stuff as dreams are made of," as the most favoured of mortals. On the contrary, so far as he evinced any feeling at all, he looked puzzled and funereal. Miss Angelica, who was close enough to hear and see, and who overheard notwithstanding her conversation with Powrie, instantly comprehended her old friend's dilemma, and before he had had time to answer came tactfully to his relief.

"My good Mr. Tysford, after conferring with my brother, I have decided to accept your cordial invitation." The old man smiled. She continued hurriedly: "The Kincardine family has for nearly a century been bound to ours by very precious ties, and as you have been very friendly to the present Duke, I cannot find it in my heart to slight your request. And then as I am quite at home in the Kincardine mansions, whether in Scotland or in England, and have the privilege of staying there whenever I please, and know the domestics thoroughly, it may be possible for me to contribute to your ease and comfort during your stay in London. And, therefore, I will take possession to-morrow, if that suits you."

Pitsligo bowed gravely and his lips moved mechanic-

Digitized by Google

ally, but he uttered never a word. For a moment or two silence reigned. Mr. Pinchover, for once in his career was too astounded for utterance; his beloved Amaryllis, that "baseless fabric of a vision," was dangerously near to a vertigo brought on by stupefaction; while Miss Olympia, who was the real author of the benignant and self-denying programme which had been so summarily brought to an end, cast withering and objurgatory looks on Angelica, and yet, even she, though sarcastic and cutting remarks trembled on her tongue, was also speechless. Miss Rowallan again relieved the unpleasant tension.

Smilingly she put her arm round the waist of Olympia, who she saw was ready to cry from sheer disappointment, and heeding only the promptings of her own kind heart, exclaimed: "And you, my dear, must come and visit me, and spend some time with me. I shall be lonely in all the splendour of the Duke's palace, and it will be a real joy to an old lady like myself to have a young companion, especially one as attractive as yourself. You will come, now, won't you?"

This pacific plea went far towards improving the strained situation. It did not reconcile or wholly please all the parties concerned; but it was distinctly tranquillizing. Jabez composed his ruffled feathers; Pitsligo bowed his head, and inwardly wished himself back in Australia; Olympia, turning to her mother, once more ecstatic, observed—"Isn't she lovely!" and the metaphysical Amaryllis breathed a response into the abyss of her phantasmagorial though palpable bosom—"The horrid thing! She's after the old man's money;" while Powrie ended the scene by announcing that the Sergeant had placed the luggage on the carriages, and that they must no longer delay.

The Kincardine palace was not unlike many other residences of similar rank in London, huge, ugly, sprawling, overcrowded with antiquated furniture, famous pictures and gorgeous bric-a-brac, and sumptuously uninviting and cheerless. Pitsligo, however, was indifferent

Digitized by Google

to the splendour of his surroundings, and to the obsequiousness of the powdered lackey who bowed him to his spacious bed-chamber. Dick Gowanlock followed him up-stairs, bringing his old pack, now rendered somewhat less conspicuous by new brown paper wrappings, and immediately left him to take possession of a valet's room not far from that of his master. Pitsligo stretched himself on the couch and drew the outer cover over him, and having placed his chronometer within easy reach, and having gazed long and ardently on the jewelled and talismanic locket, from which he never parted, fell into restful and dreamless sleep.

The morning brought to him a troubled day. The vaingloriousness of Mr. Pinchover, which created a craving to see in print his own name, associated with that of a multi-millionaire, had prompted him to give timely notice to the newspapers of Mr. Tysford's arrival in London. Consequently at an early hour bells rang and knockers knocked, and before breakfast was over the palace was invaded by reporters all intent on obtaining an extended and exclusive interview. As this, in the circumstances, was impossible, they assailed their helpless victim singly and in squadrons. They explored, rummaged, catechized, quizzed and pumped, and so tortured the Australian that he said what he did not mean to say, contradicted himself, and committed himself to theories and opinions he had never for a moment entertained.

When they had completed their deadly work they hastily forsook the old man whom they had subjected to thumb-screw, rack and pincer, and having revised his statements to meet their own views and harmonize with the policy of their respective journals, they painted him for the delectation of their readers in such colours as suited their humour. As soon as their backs were turned the unnerved and agitated Pitsligo ordered that no reporters should after this be admitted, and declared in his most solemn and emphatic way that he would dismiss any one who should fail to carry out his instructions. At that moment a violent knock and a strenuous ring announced

Digitized by Google

another visitor. Pitsligo impatiently waved to Dick Gowanlock a command to bar the way to his room, and that redoubtable veteran promptly obeyed. As he closed the door behind him and descended the stairs, halfway down he met a man, who, having pushed the footman aside, was ascending without further ceremony.

"Halt!" exclaimed the Sergeant. "Who the devil are you?"

"I am the representative of the Associated Press of the United States, and must see the great millionaire. The people in America are dying to know more about him," replied the intruder.

"Too bad to have them die," rejoined the Sergeant. "Tell me what are they curious about?"

"Then," inquired the American reporter, "I presume I have the honour of addressing Mr. Pitsligo Tysford, one of the richest men in the world?"

Dick Gowanlock did not feel called upon to undeceive him, and thought he could do no harm in amusing himself at the expense of the reporter, especially as a paper published in the United States would never be seen by his master. He therefore led the way to a reception-room in the lower hall, and told the newspaper man to fire away. Question followed question in swift succession, and the account of the answers cabled to the States, and then recabled to London—which upset Dick terribly when he read them next morning, and led the long-suffering Pitsligo to comment forcibly on the mendaciousness of the press—revealed the genius of a Munchausen.

The millionaire was made to say that his wealth was incalculable; that he could buy the Bank of England and hardly miss the money; that he regarded excessively rich men as the gift of Providence; that the more they took for themselves from the pocket of the poorer classes the better off the poorer classes were, and the more food and clothing they would necessarily enjoy; that wealth in a few hands would do more good than it could do if diffused, for while its diffusion would mean the end of

Digitized by Google

poverty and want, its concentration would mean art-galleries, palatial residences, luxuries, refinement and splendid tombs; that, as for himself, he intended to settle in England and build a house three times as large as Buckingham Palace, lay out spacious parks, purchase a title, marry into the nobility, and erect a monument to himself more wonderful than the one commemorative of Sir Walter Scott at Edinburgh, for as money is worth more in the world than books, the maker of money is entitled to more honour than the maker of books.

When Pitsligo read this nonsensical talk attributed to him he was amazed and mortified; amazed at the stupendous lies which were thus put into circulation, and mortified to think that those around him would have reason to charge him with arrant and blatant idiocy. Had he only known that sentiments somewhat similar to these had found favour with many, he would not have worried as much as he did; for then he would have realized that representations he deplored would be regarded by multitudes as the quintessence of earthly wisdom. All this, however, was alien to his simple and unsophisticated mind, and he could not but grieve that he had been so caricatured and belied.

Nor were his tribulations confined to the treatment he had received from the press, they were multiplied and intensified by the appeals made to his benevolence on behalf of innumerable charities. Callers, men, women and even children, besieged his dwelling. They trod on the heels of the reporters. They would not be denied admission; and during his first day in London Pitsligo had to meet more people with subscription books in their hands, had to hear more stories of harrowing suffering, had to listen to more cranks, and had to bear with more philanthropists, who were seeking for themselves vicarious merit by assisting him to spend his money, than he had ever supposed "lived, moved and had their being" in civilized society.

These pertinacious and necessitous friends of the indigent entreated, argued, coaxed, wept, importuned and

Digitized by Google

almost threatened; and as good as declared that if the orphans they represented, the starving tailors, the underpaid seamstresses, the impoverished flower-girls, the destitute military and naval veterans, the aged and neglected actors, the unfortunate and decayed gentlewomen, the wronged and penniless curates, the ragged and hungry street gamins, the unrecoverable "submerged tenth," the homes for inebriates, for cripples, for incurables, for abandoned cats and friendless dogs, whose sacred cause they urged on the attention of the affluent, were not appropriately and generously succoured they would not like to stand in the shoes of those hard-hearted misers who refused assistance, particularly—for so to him it seemed their warning ran—in the shoes of that hoary-headed skinflint,—Pitsligo Tysford. It was all a jumble to him. He hardly knew what it meant.

Instead of the prosperous England he had expected to find he appeared to have fallen on a mendicant nation. He debated with himself, as he listened to tales of sorrow, whether almsgiving would ever afford adequate relief, and whether after all it was not merely a criminal, though amiable, complicity with an industrial system, which, wherever it prevailed, either in Europe or America, was apparently slowly pauperizing the people, compelling them to receive as charity what they ought to receive as wages.

He was not satisfied in his own mind, and like many others in similar perplexity, he kept on giving and doubting, doubting and giving till the evening time. The story spread of his generosity, and for the sake of stirring up other wealthy individuals, accounts of his benefactions were published by agents of impecunious charities in the morning papers, and thus, with the beginning of the new day, the stream of solicitors flowed afresh and was augmented by tramps, cheats, and the entire army of lazy louts and incorrigible vagabonds, and likewise brought with it the additional affliction of begging letters. Many of them were from individuals, from unemployed writers, musicians, artisans, day-labourers, clergymen, people stranded in London

Digitized by Google

or suddenly bereaved and needing funds to bury mother, father, sister, child, grandmother—all penned in a business-like way and betraying no sense of personal shame. Other letters were from benevolent associations, which from their number and variety would seem to have left no ill of humanity unprovided for, and no stone unturned for the purpose of securing an income.

Most of these appeals began with manifold flatteries. Pitsligo learned for the first time that his noble benefactions were the talk of Europe, that the poor knew they could rely on him, that it was well understood that his heart was always melting with pity and his hand was never weary with giving. These letters usually wound up with the confident expectation that he would not prove obdurate to the plea now presented on behalf of a church organ, a Sabbath-school library, a sailors' "Snug Harbor," a new mission to the Yatatooes in the dark primeval forests of benighted Africa, a widows' home, a drunkards' asylum, a convicts' refuge, a temperance public house, a barmaids' alliance, a "friendly lead" for the burial of a costermonger's wife, and a league for the promotion of marriage among the underpaid children of honest toil.

Miss Angelica Rowallan arrived at the palace—with her usual good sense she very speedily set things to rights. Her serene gentleness did not prevent her from acting firmly and decisively. She comprehended readily the exact condition of affairs. Professional beggars were ordered off the premises, worthy petitioners were dismissed with kindly words, and all were reminded that this overcrowding before the millionaire had had time to feel at home in the metropolis might harden his heart to every charitable appeal. Then Angelica, having pacified the ardent subscription seekers, and dispersed the hungry mob of mendicants, sought Pitsligo, and found him, looking woebegone and the picture of helpless despair, with his mass of correspondence scattered on the table and floor. As soon as he saw her his face brightened, and as a child might inquire of a wise mother, he asked: "And what shall I do now?"

Digitized by Google

"Do?" she replied promptly. "Do what the fear of God and your own conscience dictate, never forgetting that you are His steward, and accountable to Him alone for the use to which you put your money."

"Ah, Angelica," and the dear old lady smiled to think that he had so soon forgotten his resolve to call her the Mistress of Rowallan only, "what I have seen, heard, and the letters I have read make my wealth a terror to me. I am custodian for humanity of millions, and am answerable to humanity for their fair and beneficent expenditure. But who is really competent to administer such a trust? Better by far that these enormous fortunes should be diffused, and each individual should meet his own responsibility, than for one poor soul as short-sighted as the rest, and just as weak, vain and foolish, to assume that he can apply them for the benefit of others more advantageously than they could use them, if distributed, for themselves."

As this man was struggling with one of the gravest problems which modern progress has created, and was sick at heart, down in Bishopsgate Street, Mr. Pinchover, who had accepted the bogus interview recabled from America as genuine, was expatiating volubly and loudly on the unexpected and laudable flourish of trumpets it contained and the grand doings it proposed; and farther away in a forlorn, weather-beaten cottage, a young man beginning to convalesce listened to his nurse reading the same article, and when she had finished he pushed his white fingers through his red hair, contemptuously exclaiming: "What a parvenu!"

Digitized by Google

XX

UNEXPECTED TRACES OF A FORGOTTEN CRIME

DURING his absence from Gower Street, several things had occurred there of more than ordinary interest, and not without promise of opening the road to the wealth which Mitchie Carfrae was so anxiously seeking. As he entered the lodging house, he was surprised to see a stranger,—a short, stout, red-cheeked lass—bustling about instead of Tina, whom he had seen at work that very morning before he set out for business.

"Who are you?" he somewhat brusquely asked.

"I'm the new girl, sir, Jenks."

"Jenks? But have you no other name?"

"Yes, sir. Jamie Jenks, sir, but they allers calls me Jenks, sir."

"Well, then, Jenks, how came you here, and where is Tina?"

"You mean I s'pose, Miss Tina, sir? Don't you know, sir, she's a rich young 'ooman as is gone 'ome to her father, an' that she drove away from 'ere in a coach with four 'osses an' ever so many big flunkies."

Mitchie did not longer parley with this slavey, who was evidently enraptured by the romantic story of her predecessor in office, and dreamily hopeful that she might be claimed as the long lost child of wealthy, if not of noble, parents. He ascended the stairs and obtained admission into the inner sanctum where Mrs. Gowanlock frequently mourned over the better days she had seen, and where at that moment she was in deep potations and in earnest conversation with Thalia Thesperius. It did not take much time for these excited women, the one petulantly, the other theatrically, to relate how Tina had

Digitized by Google

been abducted by a coarse female, "a horrid thing," who declared that she was the girl's mother, "just fancy!" and had come to take the girl back to her father, whose carriage waited for her at the door, and, "to think of it," that carriage belonged to an admirer of Madam's—"shameful, outrageous, despicable, infamous!"—"to the Honourable Master of Rowallan." As the two women tried to outdo each other in the fierceness of their invective and the bitterness of their speech, a voice sounded in the hallway, singing:

"Hâte-toi mets ta robe blanche,
Ta robe de noce aux grands plis,
Jette sur toi leur avalanche,
Châte de neige sur un lys,
Hâte-toi!"

"Stop that unearthly noise, Pierette. What do the people here want to know about your white robes, and the other nonsense!" exclaimed Madam Thalia, half opening the door to administer the rebuke, which movement, though taking but a few seconds, was sufficient to rescue Mitchie Carfrae from the astonishment into which he had been plunged.

"It seems," the actress resumed in her most approved melodramatic style, "according to the statements made by that military genius, Commander Gowanlock—I believe, Mrs. Gowanlock, you called him Commander—who was here to-day after seeing service in Scotland, that a great fortune has been bequeathed to the daughter of Rowallan, and has been brought to this country by a venerable Caliban who came over in the vessel which brought me from Australia,—Pitsligo Tysford,—and this explains the prompt action on the part of Rowallan to recover his neglected child."

"His child, his child? But how do you know she is his child?

"I don't know, but I suppose he ought to know his own offspring."

Mitchie, however, was not convinced. If Tina was

Digitized by Google

the daughter of Rowallan and Laissina his wife, then he had been misled and duped. He knew that lying was not a lost art with Mrs. Quaco, and, therefore, all that he had just heard might be the truth. If so, then he could understand why she had warned him against recognizing Rowallan's daughter should he meet her. What he had heard was manifestly to his advantage. He had her secret and she must placate and silence him by the only thing he cared for—gold. If in fact Rowallan's wife, she would not want her husband to know all he knew about her more recent life; and if she was not, then there must be potent reasons why both she and Rowallan would desire to keep Tysford in ignorance of Tina's domestic servitude.

"Tina," he reflected, "she, after all, is the real prize. Happy her husband! And why might not Mitchie Carfrae wed her fortune and herself? Umph! all things are possible." This little mental monologue he was careful not to disclose. He kept it strictly to himself. After a brief pause, returning to the subject on which the women had enlarged, he remarked:

"I suppose we ought to be glad for Tina. I always thought she was a very nice girl, and above her station in life."

"What! that slipshod, untidy snip of a girl!" responded Mrs. Gowanlock, quite taken aback by her prize lodger's praise. "Who would have thought this of you, Mr. Carfrae? You're just like my Dick. Gold blinds your vision to all defects. My, what sordid creatures men are!" And the good woman rolled up her eyes to heaven, appealing to some invisible existence for confirmation of her damaging estimate of the sterner sex. The object of her momentary scorn, however, was not dismayed. He merely inquired as to the misdeeds of the Sergeant which had exposed him to her unfavourable judgment.

"What has he done? Better ask what he has not done! He is perfectly infatuated with this Pitsligo Tysford. When he heard that Tina had been removed

Digitized by Google

from this house that had been, God knows, more than a home to her, he laughed in his silly way for joy. 'This is better news,' he cried out, 'than I'd expected. I heard Miss Rowallan talk of her niece she expected to see in London for the first time, but I had no idea it was Tina. How could I? They didn't tell me, and I didn't listen. I only listened once—and then I didn't mean it, and heard what I wrote you—that he said his name was not Pitsligo Tysford. But never again. Not if I knows it, and I think I do. Still when they talked about the niece, and how rich she would be, I couldn't help hearing. And to think that it is Tina! My—won't I give her the grand hailing sign of happiness! How the old man will love her! He'll just dote on her—and he's a stunning saint in his way, too; and I wish 'em both joy.' Now, why do you think he went on in that rigmarole fashion? Why? Simply gold, gold! I tell you, Mitchie Carfrae, Dick Gowanlock would never have taken on in that absurd manner if he had not been actuated by a love of money—— Yes, 'Money is the root of all evil.'"

"Right you are," echoed Madam Thesperius. "Men are heartless, mercenary wretches. Would you believe it, Mr. Carfrae, when his amiable and long-suffering wife suggested that this Pitsligo would not have changed his name unless to hide a crime, and that the crime might have been one that had robbed her of a loving and wealthy uncle, in his coarse soldier way the Commander, who had his pockets full of money, hard cash, and scattered it about extravagantly, ridiculed her and declared that this aged friend of his would not injure a mouse. Don't you see what a mammon worshipper the brave veteran has become? Too bad, too bad, too bad!"

"But did either of you ladies suggest to the Sergeant that his patron might have accumulated his property through some villainous means, such as fraud—or——?"

"Murder!" Mrs. Gowanlock added sepulchrally.

"Murder!" repeated Mitchie, scarcely crediting what

Digitized by Google

he heard. "I cannot for the life of me imagine why you should entertain so fearful a suspicion."

"Of course not," replied Mrs. Gowanlock hoarsely and frigidly, "you're a man, and a man never sees farther than the end of his nose, and it must not be a long nose at that."

"But tell me, on what grounds do you rest these gruesome suppositions? You shock me by your insinuations."

"Then listen," Mrs. Gowanlock answered severely, and her cap vibrated, her voice became husky and her eyes lost the little brilliancy they possessed and assumed a greenish colour. "Listen! You yourself told us yesterday that Mr. Amos Odlum had shown you the yellow, you said yellow,—I take God to witness you said yellow—passenger list of the *Jack Cade*, of the 'White Ball Line,' which was lost at sea, and that you had read the name—Pitsligo Tysford—my noble uncle, whose mysterious fate I've mourned ever since my girlhood." Here she wept a few scant tears, Madam Thesperius drew nearer and placed her supporting arms round her waist, and she composed herself by an ample portion of gin. Then she continued:

"You also informed us that Mr. Odlum had reported that this Australian had admitted to him that he was one of the voyagers on this very vessel, when it foundered and all hands were lost. And now, sir," and here her manner became more magisterial, and Thalia gazed at her with special admiration as though witnessing the tragicalities of a Sarah Bernhardt, "you will not surely deny, either that Gowanlock's ears deceived him and that this man is my uncle, Pitsligo Tysford, or that he must have a very good reason, which in such circumstances must be a very bad one, for robbing a dead man of his name. Why may he not have murdered my uncle on board ship for the sake of his money and his papers?"

"But," suggested the incredulous Mitchie, "as your lamented uncle went out in an emigrant ship his money

Digitized by Google

and papers couldn't have been of sufficient value to provoke such a crime."

"You are all the same. I knew you men would stand together," responded the exasperated Nancy Gowanlock, "and you, I suppose, like my deluded husband, will not believe that there is some terrible secret which this sham Pitsligo Tysford is afraid an old Jew will let out and ruin him?"

"Now, my much esteemed Mrs. Gowanlock, you are talking riddles. I have never heard of any Jew in connection with Mr. Pitsligo Tysford, and am absolutely in the dark."

"I take Madam Thesperius to witness," exclaimed Mrs. Gowanlock, solemnly and as though her veracity had been impugned, "that the Sergeant told us both that on the train for Edinburgh this fraud of a Tysford met a Jew, that he knew him, and talked with him privately in a compartment of the coach in which they travelled."

"Well, did the Sergeant overhear that conversation as well as the other?"

"No, he didn't try, and the noise on the road would have prevented if he had tried."

"Then I don't see why you should imagine that there was any wrong or any secret between these men. They may simply have desired a quiet chat after years of separation. That and nothing more."

"But that," retorted the judicial Gowanlock, "is of great importance to us, for if the Jew knew him before he sailed for Australia he can tell us who he is, whether he is really my uncle, or whether he bore a good character in those days or not. I repeat it,—the clew is in the hands of this Ichabod Raphiel."

"Ichabod Raphiel!" exclaimed Carfrae.

"You speak and look as though you knew him," both women answered almost in the same breath.

"Not at all. But how did you know his name?"

"Why, my husband says he shouted it out himself during the journey to Scotland."

"Well," resumed Carfrae, "this is singular enough.

Digitized by Google

I've never met Raphiel; but I've heard of him. He keeps a pawn shop in the East End; and he's a chartered accountant. A distinguished friend of our house has borrowed money from him at times, and he's reputed to be a grasping, parsimonious and rapacious old-scamp."

"Then you admit," Mrs. Gowanlock triumphantly replied, "that there is something in what I have said, and that this Pitsligo Tysford must either be my uncle or a monster of iniquity."

"In that case, why may he not be both?" Then seeing the expression of stupefied horror on the face of Mrs. Gowanlock, Mitchie continued: "I mean no offense. And I really must say that your logic is quite beyond me."

At this point the women smiled knowingly at each other, as if to signify that it could hardly be expected that any man would be capable of following the mazy subtleties of feminine reasoning. They also silently congratulated each other in a modicum of gin.

A pause.

Mitchie Carfrae moved uneasily in his chair. He crumpled an unlit cigarette in his hand, and gazed into vacancy. Madam Thesperius rose and came to his side and in a stage whisper demanded that he rouse himself and avenge the wrongs of Mrs. Gowanlock, concluding with the tragical wish that she could "place a whip in every honest hand to whip this rascal" (meaning Pitsligo, alas!) "naked through the world."

Mitchie, while he had no sympathy with the blood-curdling phantasy of his landlady, could plainly see the advantage of learning all that could be learned of Pitsligo Tysford. There are few lives that have not in them passages which are best concealed, and which, even when they are not distinctly vicious, may create a very wrong and damaging impression if they are brought into the light. It might, then, come to pass that some juvenile indiscretion, such as an infelicitous love affair, or some unhappy family connection, if discovered and judiciously

Digitized by Google

worked, might prove remarkably efficacious in unloosing Pitsligo's purse strings. Worth trying, thought Mitchie, and straightway he launched into an eloquent eulogy on the abnormal perspicacity of Mrs. Gowanlock.

Such penetrating, needle-witted intelligence he had never encountered before. Had no idea, he continued, that it was in her. He had now a higher estimate of the reasoning powers of the sex, as he always had had of their super-excellent (bowing to Thalia) dramatic gifts. And he counted it an honour to cooperate with them. He would worm his way into the confidence of this Jew, and compel him to dislodge all that he knew about this returned emigrant, and whatever he found out he straightway would communicate to them.

On these terms the admirable trio separated; Thalia to win fresh laurels from the theatre-going public; Nancy to gin and melancholy, interspersed with sarcastic rebukes addressed to the new girl, Jamie Jenks, and Mitchie to his Semitic explorations.

It was after eight when he started, and the streets were very dark; but a drive of half an hour in a hansom brought him to Old Jewrey and to the offices of Ichabod Raphiel. Mitchie, though he had never seen this infamous money-lender, knew more about him than he had acknowledged to his friends on Gower Street. Chowler, who had represented the Duke of Kincardine in one or two transactions with the money shark, had told him much concerning his ways, and had described the premises where he lived and did business. He had no difficulty, therefore, in locating the house, and he certainly had no hesitancy in knocking. While it was late for trade-negotiations, Mitchie had learned from Chowler that Ichabod was ready to dicker and bargain at any hour day or night.

In response to his knock the outer door opened automatically and he entered a small vestibule and faced another door, through a grated window in which a gleaming eye could be seen, and through which a voice sounded demanding the name of the visitor, his card and

Digitized by Google

his business. A card was handed through the opening with a few explanatory words, which had been carefully collated for the occasion. The aperture was closed and for several moments Mitchie remained in the dark and not free from suspense. Suddenly the other door opened. He did not see who opened it. The figure was almost entirely concealed by the door itself, and the room was only dimly lighted; but he thought he heard the cocking of a pistol.

"Stand where you are until you are summoned," the voice commanded, "and do not look behind you." He did not have to wait long. A heavy curtain was drawn aside at the farther end of the room, and beyond there sat at a table covered with papers and near by a safe which was carefully secured, the venerable Jew, Ichabod Raphiel. He raised his picturesque head, and pointing to a chair at some distance from his own, said: "Approach, mine friends, and sits there." Mitchie did as he was ordered, and as he did so he caught again the sound of an ominous click, and was conscious that the figure of a man was hidden in the folds of the curtain. He was not seriously disturbed. He had not come to harm any one, and unless he provoked attack, he did not believe that any one would harm him.

While he had not expected these signs of armed guards, yet when he remembered the age of the Hebrew, his wealth and loneliness, he was not astonished that these precautions were taken. He proceeded to state his errand as though he had not observed anything unusual. His own relation to "The Sovereign Steamship Company, Limited," he explained. He then proceeded to give an account of the new "Emancipator Mining and Building Company," in which the head of the steamship line was interested, and informed him that he was instructed to employ a chartered accountant on behalf of the latter company, and Chowler, who was a member of the Board requested him to come in his stead, as he was rushed with work, and offer him the position.

"Vot you says, my shons, ish goods, but vy not tells

Digitized by Google

me alls this to-morrows mornings, eh?" And the Jew scrutinized Mitchie's face, while incredulity and cunning were spread over his own. The curtains behind him also rustled. Mitchie heard the movement, but he did not stir. He had come without planning how to introduce the special object of his visit, and to his great relief the question that sounded so dangerous had happily prepared the way for it to be brought forward naturally and without constraint.

"To be perfectly candid, sir, the directors of the company felt that they were being crowded by a singular gentleman who has recently returned from Australia, and who has become a large purchaser of stock, and who may obtain a controlling interest. Among other things he proposed the name of an accountant, and when to safeguard themselves the directors objected to a stranger, and at Chowler's suggestion proposed yourself, he violently attacked all Jews and you in particular, and would none of them or of you. To-morrow the election must take place, and to head him off by saying that they are already committed, Chowler on behalf of the directors desired me, if possible, to invite you this night to undertake the business."

"An' whose this shon of Belial, this Hamans, an' vy he's so mads against the Ishraelites?"

"His name is Pitsligo Tysford."

It was now Mitchie's turn to watch, and it was not difficult to read unutterable things in the countenance of Ichabod.

The Jew's face had changed colour, that is, the skin had graduated from its shrivelled parchment tinge into a dirty yellow ochre hue: the abundant wrinkles in brow, cheeks and chin had become more manifold and complicated; the bushy eyebrows had been raised to court acquaintance with the white hair bordering the forehead, revealing a pair of meagre, watery, ferret eyes; and the bony, skinny fingers had commenced to clutch and twitch, clinch and grip, as though squeezing, squeezing, squeezing. Since his meeting with Tysford on the train

Digitized by Google

and at Edinburgh his thoughts had been busy with him. After prolonged searching of his memory he had restored the image of the distressed Scotch youth, and the circumstances of the young man's shipment to Australia, and he had connected therewith an event which he never could forget.

The more he thought, the more resentment he felt towards him for prospering, as he had himself predicted he would prosper, so that now he was richer than the old Fuggers of Antwerp or the new Rothschilds of Europe. To this unexampled success the Jew could not reconcile himself, and had even come to regard it as a personal affront and wrong. Hence when the hated name was uttered by Mitchie Carfrae, it was impossible for him to restrain the malevolence he harboured in his bosom.

"The maledictions of Abrams, Isaacs and Jacobs be on him!"—Ichabod blurted out wrathfully after a brief and painful pause.

"You seem to be acquainted with him, and not to like him over-much," Mitchie remarked quietly.

"Vy shoulds I likes him?" retorted the Jew excitedly. "He hates our race and he's not gratefuls to mes, who shent him to Australias. But I'll squeeze him yets, and squeeze, and squeeze!" Mitchie Carfrae perceived from the hardness in the Jew's voice, and from the malignant cruelty distorting his mouth that he would be pitiless in his treatment of the millionaire if he ever had him in his power. All this interested him, and seeing that for the moment Ichabod was off his guard, he sprung the question:

"As you knew him before he emigrated, perhaps you can tell me his true name; for the name Pitsligo Tysford is not his own."

Another change came over the Jew. A strange corpse-like pallor overspread his face; the eyes betrayed fear, a slight tremour agitated his form, and he rose to his feet, still, however, nervously clenching his hands as though he were squeezing, squeezing. The curtain moved and rustled. A tall, sinewy man appeared in view. Ichabod

Digitized by Google

waved him away, and peremptorily ordered him to a post in the adjoining room. Mitchie had heard and seen, but had remained fixed in his chair, calm and imperturbable. He comprehended the situation. The guard had hastily come to his master's succour inferring from his excited manner that he was in personal peril. As soon as he had withdrawn the Jew resumed his seat, and with a dirty bandanna removed the cold sweat from his forehead.

"Excuse mes," he said to Mitchie, "I vas suddenlys takens vith a horribles pain."

Carfrae tried to look solemn and sympathetic. "Can I get anything for you?" he inquired.

"No, ish betters now. Who told you ish's name not ish name?"

"He admitted it himself."

"Vell, I never knew ish's t'others name."

Then, thought Mitchie, that is one point decided; he has another name, and he is not Gowanlock's lamented uncle, and also it must have been assumed before he sailed for Australia. He mentally recorded these conclusions, and ventured farther:

"But I do not see why this fact should have embittered you against him?"

"How shoulds you?" retorted the Jew. "You cants know all vats I dids for that mans; how vens he vas in troubles I tolds him to taks the dead man's ticket, an' hows he ships vids it an' goes avay an' gets rich, an' rich, an' rich, an' never shends me a stivers. Ugh! vat an ingrates ish is—faugh!"

"So," replied Mitchie, "there was a dead man, was there? And this Pitsligo Tysford has lived in a dead man's stolen shoes, and he has grown rich on murder."

"Hush!" whispered the Jew, now trembling and perspiring copiously. "I nevers shaid anythings abouts murders. The mans may have just fallens downs on hish beds and dieds—that all!"

But Mitchie did not require preternatural discernment to perceive that back of this emotion there was hidden a

Digitized by Google

secret—and a dark one at that—and that the defunct individual in question did not pass out of the world in this commonplace manner. He did not, however, try to learn more of a tragedy which so violently excited his host. Enough had been ascertained for his immediate purpose. Therefore, after some platitudinous speech regarding the ingratitude of men, especially of this base-hearted Pitsligo, he returned to his original proposition and urged the Jew to stand for election as the Chartered Accountant of the Emancipator Company. Ichabod finally was persuaded to commit himself, particularly as this position would give him access to several gentlemen of wealth and would probably furnish the opportunity he sought to squeeze, squeeze, squeeze—some one.

An understanding reached, and the interview ended, Ichabod led Mitchie into the room adjoining, and pointed to the door. The door opened before Mitchie, as of its own accord. He entered the vestibule, and as he did so the door closed behind him in the same way, while the one before him opened and he passed into the street.

"I thinks I says not too much. Just enoughs to makes talk; an' then if he does not pay an' pay an' pay, vy I can tells somethings that vill puts a rope round his neck. Oh, I'll squeeze, squeeze, squeeze him—I sees how nows." And chuckling with satisfaction he called Tubal Cain, his slave and protector, and leaning on his arm shambled up-stairs to his bed-chamber.

Mitchie Carfrae lighted a cigar and walked briskly through the quiet streets in the direction of the bank, and as he walked he, likewise, congratulated himself. "I had hardly expected it would be so easy. The ground is clear, and now the women must act. Gowanlock can prove by the Jew that Tysford sailed with another man's passenger ticket. What then became of the uncle? It will cost him a pretty sum to avoid publicity and—worse. I must also be bought, and that will make me rich enough even if I don't marry Tina Rowallan."

Just then the fire in his cigar was extinguished and he observed for the first time that it was snowing.

Digitized by Google

XXI

"A REPROACH OF MEN AND DESPISED"

THE snow fell all night and the next day, and the day following, and was tramped by the myriad feet of horses and men into a foul and sticky slush. Here and there, as in the garden breathing-spots of the great metropolis, and on the boughs of sickly trees struggling for existence in forgotten corners of old church-yards, the white crystalline flakes lingered and adorned, and wrought themselves into lovely and artistic robes and garlands.

Few of the thousands, however, who pushed their way along the muddy streets had any heart of appreciation in them for nature's charming vignettes done in the lily's monochrome. They were too chilly and forlorn to be interested in the beautiful. They wheezed and coughed so much, and the spectral horror of pneumonia alarmed them so terribly, that they pressed forwards only anxious to reach their homes.

Among the thousands of wretched pedestrians there was one, conspicuously taller than the rest, who moved along dreamily and aimlessly, and who, without winter overcoat or overshoes, seemed to be more miserable than his fellows. His clothes were wet, his broad-brimmed clerical hat was damp and limp, his shoes were soaked and soggy, and his whole appearance betokened one who was utterly indifferent to his fate.

Blair Hamley, indeed, had passed through enough since his courageous rescue of the Red Comyn to crush and dismay the most valiant and virtuous of souls. Notwithstanding his circumspection and his honourable course he had been vilified, traduced and cast out as evil. As he reflected on what he had done, and on what had

Digitized by Google

taken place within the week, he could not discover wherein he had furnished reasonable grounds for suspicions and vile insinuations.

On the night of the Duke's extreme peril he had brought a physician to the cottage, and on the next morning had placed his lordship in the hands of a nurse —Sister Zita, called by those who knew her best, Santa Zita—one of those women who have added so much to the glory of the Anglican Church in these later times. To her and to her alone did he communicate the real name and rank of her patient, for he knew that she could be trusted. To her also he committed sufficient money for all expenses, and arranged with her that the Duke, on returning to consciousness, should be called Mr. Comyn. He did not feel, having thus provided for the wounded man, and having shielded his secret, that it would be dignified in him, after what had passed between them, to intrude any farther.

One other duty he had to perform. Fiona also must be guarded. To her, therefore, he explained the delicacy of her position, and the importance of her leaving the cottage as soon as possible. He advised her as soon as she could endure the separation to seek aid and counsel from Miss Rowallan. Nothing more was left for him to do, except to read the funeral services over the remains of one whose last days on earth had been darkened by tragic memories; and to talk confidentially with Shane, urging him to be specially watchful over Lena, and promising him that he should be amply compensated for present inconvenience.

It was, therefore, with a clear conscience, if not with a light heart, that Blair Hamley resumed his parochial work. On his way to Dorset Street he called at the house of a tradesman whose child had been ill, and, to his surprise, was received with cold civility and refused admission to the patient. The father assured him that the mother was out, though he had seen her but a moment before looking at him timidly over the bannisters, and that there would be no need for him to call again, as

Digitized by Google

they had made up their mind hereafter to attend on the "edifying and spiritual ministry of Zion's Chapel." A case of vulgar proselyting, thought Hamley as he turned away from the door, and left his former parishioner with kindly wishes for the well-being of him and his. As he continued his walk he imagined that several humble people, whom he had helped in the past, failed to return his friendly salutations. When he reached the top of Dorset Street he heard, and he could not avoid hearing, for the dossers spoke loud enough for the neighbourhood to hear, that "those religious blokes gits a livin' out o't, an' it comes out of chink wot's surscribed for we uns, an' our chap o' a parson 'as more wits than most on 'em an' is allus good fer baccy. He ain't much on preachin', but he takes up with them shirt-makers' girls an' helps them start a union. An' he has a missus, too. Why arn't he bein' married 'cordin' to hact o' parliament?"

"What could all this silly talk mean?" inquired Blair Hamley mentally of himself. He did not, however, stop to ask questions of dockers, stevedores, loafers, and the riff-raff of this squalid portion of East End rowdyism. On entering the doss house the deputy from his window nodded familiarly, and jeeringly inquired whether the clergyman desired a "singles" or a "doubles." Blair Hamley did not see the point or feel the sting implied in the coarse jest, but he had not long to remain in doubt of its meaning.

When he approached the kitchen, which served as parlour as well, and attempted to find out whether he could be of any service to the dossers, male or female, he was received with mocking laughter and with cries of "Where's the missus? Gawd, ye arn't guv her the chuck so soon? Bring her 'ere an' we'll go an' 'ave a booze." And the tattered men and women sniggered, bantered, chaffed, quizzed, grinned, and pointed their fingers at Blair Hamley, hustled him about the room, yelled scurrilous things in his ear and imperilled the very coat on his back. Their victim was dumb with amazement. He was speechless. Helpless, he was driven to

Digitized by Google

and fro, and was conscious that these dregs of society were bent on making him feel that he was no better than themselves, and he half-suspected that he was sinking to their low level.

From the jumble of talk going on around him he realized that these wretched creatures had put the worst conceivable construction on Fiona's appearance at the doss house in search of himself, and he knew that no ordinary denials, protestations or appeals would have the least effect on them or disabuse their minds of that which they wished to believe as true. In his uncertainty, and when the frenzy of mockery was at its height, a policeman, supposing that some one was being murdered, entered the room, and in a summary way put an end to the turbulent scene.

Blair Hamley, shamed, and trembling with a sense of degradation, turned his back on the uncouth company and sought the open street. He could hear their derisive laughter as he hastened to escape from the disreputable neighbourhood. Onward he strode with head bent, with heart beating painfully; and with no definite plan of action to govern him, he reached the office of the "Working Girls' Friendly Union," and inquired for the Mistress of Rowallan. The stiff, guardian angel of the place replied in a cool and offish way that she was not in the building, and that if she had been there she would have asked to be excused.

"Great God!" exclaimed Hamley, "why am I exposed to this unqualified discourtesy?"

"Your own memory, to say nothing of your conscience, can furnish you a more conclusive answer than I can."

"But will you not, for love of heaven, give me an inkling of what has poisoned the mind of Miss Rowallan against me?"

"I really know very little, and have ceased prying into gutters and sewers. But this much I do know. The day after the mistress returned from Scotland several women came to her from a doss house on Dorset Street,

Digitized by Google

and in their talk they said things of you which it ought not to be possible to say, and I was told afterwards to inform you, should you call, that, as this office has to do with young women, it would be better for you to come no more."

"And is it possible that Miss Rowallan, herself the very soul of justice, could so far forget my life and my work as to give credence to these base and groundless accusations!"

"Excuse me, sir, if I do not discuss this matter further. I am acting under instructions, and have no other alternative than to say that this interview is now ended;" words spoken with the crisp decision of the disciplinarian and martinet. Had she ordered him out of the house her speech could not have been more offensive to a nature as sensitive as his. He did not venture to look at her. Cowed and unnerved, he slowly moved to the door, a humiliated and broken-hearted man, and staggered into the street. A ragged lad came up to him and said: "Say, guv'nor, don't yer know it'll soon be Christmas, an' yer 'at's in yer 'and, an' oughter be on yer 'ead." In the horror of the great darkness, he had forgotten to put it on.

That night was spent in an agony of prayer. The Church took on the character of a Gethsemane, and there by himself in the solemn gloom, prostrate on the cold stones, Blair Hamley cried:

> "Lord, why castest Thou off my soul?
> Why hidest Thou Thy face from me?"

During the weary hours he, likewise, recalled the face of Fiona, and wondered whether God was punishing him because he had been drawn to her as to no other woman. But then he had never to her betrayed his poor human weakness, and if for a moment he had faltered in his devotion to a life of celibacy, surely the All-Father, having made us for home, for wife and children, would not fail to compassionate the work of His hands. At last the vigil ended, and the clergyman, stiff and cold from the

Digitized by Google

chill pervading the sanctuary, opened the heavy door and looked out—and it was snowing.

He spent the day in his own rooms, and experienced a fresh shock from a letter, couched in frigidly formal terms, commanding him to abstain from all ministerial functions until certain damaging rumours could be sifted and disproven, and signed by the bishop.

Towards evening he went out, forgetting to protect himself against the inclement weather, and wandered up and down the East End until the morning. When he again sought refuge in his rooms, he did not change his clothes or sleep, and the simple repast set before him remained untouched. He sat there looking out of the window, watching the snow and thinking and brooding. More than once he considered the most favourable way of voluntarily migrating from this world, and he recalled several articles in the London press on the subject of euthanasia—a euphemism for self-murder. He even went so far as to remonstrate with God, and like one of old to "curse the day wherein he was born." The more he brooded, argued, the deeper became the soul's darkness, and the more awful the soul's anguish. After a prolonged pause, he cried out sadly but firmly, as though the conflict had gone against the Evil One,—"Though God slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Once more with the ending of the day, Blair Hamley went into the snowy streets. He was weak and dizzy from fasting, and yet he cared not to turn into one of the many coffee-houses and eat or drink. If he stopped before a cook-shop and inhaled the savoury odours, it was only for a moment, and then he hurried on, imagining that some one was pursuing him. He never knew what streets he traversed, or how frequently he retraced his way, for he had become absent-minded and strangely bewildered. From Spitalfields to Shoreditch he tramped slowly and wearily, and then turned into the road leading to Hackney Common.

It was now increasingly difficult for him to drag one foot after the other, and yet he pushed ahead, feeling,

Digitized by Google

and yet not understanding, the numbness and languor fast creeping over him. Arrested by the flaring splendour of a gorgeous public house he came to a halt, and grateful for the warmth that escaped from the doors as they were opened by patrons, he entered and looked about him in a dazed kind of way, as if he were trying to regather his wits. He excited the attention of the tipplers who indulged in sly remarks and coarse jests at his expense, some of whom went so far as to intimate that the parson had been drinking over-much already. He was oblivious, however, to their comments.

Although Whitechapel and Spitalfields are not far from Hackney, still Blair Hamley was a stranger to the citizens of that district. The habitués of the public house had never heard of him; they had no interest in him. To them he was only a parson who had forgotten himself, and who was disgracing his cloth. The object of their idle talk, feeling faint and dizzy, leaned heavily on the bar counter, and seemed ready to fall in a heap on the floor. In his extremity an old man with a pleasant, honest, though weather-beaten face, came up to him and put his arm about him, speaking cheerily:

"There, there, mate, don't give up in that way. A nip of brandy will freshen you and brace you all right."

As soon as the word "brandy" was spoken, the barmaid, with an eye to business, poured out a glass and pushed it towards Blair Hamley. The smell of it partially aroused him, and the terror the stuff—among whose ravages he had laboured so untiringly—inspired, startled him and led him to fumble in his pocket for half-a-crown. When it had been found and laid upon the counter, he seized the glass and hurled it with its contents across the room. A hubbub immediately followed. Cries of "madman," "drunk," accompanied by a few hysterical screams from the women, occasioned something like a panic. In the midst of it the hearty old man who had placed himself by the side of Hamley, remained calm, and now that the excitement might result in violence he took his arm and drew him into the street.

Digitized by Google

The two stumbled along the road together, and when they had reached a modest home the venerable friend in need opened the door and deposited his charge on a sofa, while his wife, who had been waiting for him, looked on with not unnatural concern.

"Why, Orlop, who is this, and how came you to bring him here?"

"I'll tell you all about it, Zinnia, after we've stowed him away, found a bunk for him, and made him comfortable."

This was not an easy task when a giant was to be dealt with, and by this time Hamley had sunken into a stupour. The best that could be done was for the boatswain to bring a mattress and lay it on the floor, and then, as though he were launching a ship, to slip the stays and let the huge body glide downward to its bed. When this had been successfully accomplished, and covers had been spread over the sleeper, the sailor and his wife stepped aside, and he recounted all that had taken place, and all that he knew.

"You see, Zinnia, I couldn't do anything else. I'd been to see that friend of ours—and you'd hardly believe it, but the old chap came scudding into the room in a new set of sails—and he'd been kind, and while he hadn't learned what port Fiona had shipped to, he said he would soon find out her latitude and longitude, and he had made me take enough rhino to tide us over, and when I saw this parson on his beams ends I couldn't forget what had been done for me and keep straight on my course. So I just got a hawser out and towed him into harbour."

The pale, fair woman smiled and touched tenderly her husband's rough hand, as she said: "Ah, Orlop, this is not the first sad wreck you have rescued. God grant that he bring you not as much trouble as some others have."

That night Zinnia and Orlop took turns at keeping watch over their unfortunate guest. One would sleep awhile and then the other, and thus alternating they kept guard until the morning dawned. Just before the break

Digitized by Google

of day Zinnia from her vigil came excitedly into her husband's room, and rousing him from his heavy slumber, exclaimed: "What do you think?"

"Couldn't say. Has Davy Jones carried off the parson?"

"No; he has been talking in his sleep."

"Who? Davy Jones?"

"No, the clergyman. During the last hour he has been restless, and has groaned and sighed—and then as I lifted the candle above his face, his lips moved and he murmured my mother's name, Sibilla Macgillivray—what do you say to that?"

"I'm blowed if I knows what to think. You don't suppose the old lady could have been off on shore leave and have just taken a kind of liking to the preacher? You've always said she was very religious, and her ghost may have a hankering after the cloth."

"Why, Orlop, what nonsense you are talking."

"Perhaps 'tis; but you'll allow it's plaguey strange. Why, it's almost as staggerin' as the story of the 'Flying Dutchman,' and the yarn of the 'Ancient Mariner.'" With this reflection the old tar rose from his bed, and looked out on the street, adding: "So the night's gone and the snow-storm ended."

Three hours later another man dwelling in a different part of East London also gazed through his window on the outer world, and remarked: "Thank God, the day has come, the beastly snow has stopped falling, and I may hope to get away from this hole in an hour or two."

His Grace of Kincardine was still pale, and not overstrong, and here and there were yet lingering marks of cruel blows, but he was convalescent. He had communicated by letter with his valet, and had instructed him to prepare rooms for him at the Coburg Hotel, and to come that very day in private clothes, with a hackney carriage to remove him from Ivernia Cottage. As he waited and looked out on the dirty street, he reflected. The last ten days had supplied much food for thought. His experiences in the doss house, his encounter with the clergy-

Digitized by Google

man, his imperilled life, his rescue by the man whom he had accused of heinous wrong-doing, his recognition of the woman he loved and had slandered tenderly watching over him, and his absolute indebtedness to the sympathy and generousness of those whom he had insulted for his recovery, could not easily be banished from his mind or fail to rouse a variety of emotions. He had evidently cruelly misjudged both Blair Hamley and Fiona Youtsay; for had the former been an unworthy priest, after the contumely he had endured, he never would have risked his life on behalf of his enemy, and in every conceivable way have ministered to him, nor, by absenting himself, have prevented any and all recognition of his services. If the latter had been an unfaithful woman, she never would have devoted herself so ardently to the restoration of one whom she did not love, neither would she so promptly have retired from the house, where he was still compelled to remain, as soon as he could safely be left to the care of others. These reflections were interrupted by the entrance of the nurse with his frugal breakfast.

"Good-morning, Santa Zita."

"Good-morning, your lordship."

"But you must not forget that I am no lordship here."

"True; and you should remember also that I am no saint either. I am only Zita."

"Nevertheless," the Duke answered politely and seriously, "the woman who binds up the wounds of a suffering man, who watches over him, mothers him in his helplessness, and bears with his impatience and irritation, if he is a gentleman, will always be a saint to him."

"Believe me, Mr. Comyn," and she smiled a pleasant significant smile as she pronounced the modest title, "I am grateful for your appreciation; but when I chose this vocation I did so for the glory of the Christ, who through us reveals His love for the poor as well as for the rich, for the lowly as well as for the noble, and not for human praise."

Digitized by Google

"I am certain of it," he responded, "hence, Zita, I am more than ever minded to call you Santa. But, there, I will not offend your humility, but," and here the Duke's voice was so modulated as to become soft and coaxing, "will you not tell me to what cage or bower my beloved has flown for shelter?"

The manner of Zita became more grave and guarded as she replied: "I have explained to your Grace that Miss Youtsay confided in me. She confessed her affection for you, but for a fault not her own, a fault that has compelled her to abandon her family, she felt herself unworthy to be the wife of a high-born man, and as she could love none other than yourself, she concluded it was her duty to disappear forever from the world, not by going out of the world, but by losing her identity in the seclusion of conventual life. She exacted from me, however, the promise not to betray her retreat to you, and you cannot expect me to violate my word. I have told you this before, and I repeat it that you may know she is safe, and that you may never think ungenerous things of her. Listen, sir, the carriage has arrived."

"No, Zita; I would not have you faithless to your pledge. But hear me! if you act on the motto of my house—*Servabo fidem*—so must I. I swear by the memory of my brave ancestors that I will have the woman, who by the confession of her love is in the sight of God my wife, if I have to pull down the walls of every convent in England."

"But, Mr. Comyn, have you considered the inequality of rank and station separating you?"

"No, I have not. I have only thought of my love for Fiona and her love for me. And Santa Zita—well, excuse the Santa,—if English peers can marry without loss of prestige or social standing American commoners, why may not a Scottish duke marry an Englishwoman of lowly birth, as pure, as graceful and as true as any woman from beyond the seas."

How much farther his ecstasy might have carried him Zita never knew, for at this point Foyle Shane, followed

Digitized by Google

by the child Lena, came to announce that the vehicle that had been expected was at the door. A sheepish-looking man likewise entered the room, and played his part badly, as the inbred deference of the valet made him feel ill at ease in the presence of his master. The farewells, however, passed off without any serious hitch. Lena was petted and caressed by the Duke and some money pressed into her hand; Shane was thanked and remunerated, and was promised a visit when the invalid should be strong again; and Santa Zita was honoured with special commendations and with whispered expressions of gratitude and friendship. The disguised servant had slipped into the hands of his Grace a purse well-filled, from which he drew the money to discharge his obligations with as little show as possible, but its bulk had not escaped the lynx eyes of the honest-looking Shane. Through the hall and down the stairs went the Duke with the valet helping on one side and the officious host on the other.

When the carriage arrived at the "Coburg," and his Grace felt for his purse, to his amazement he found that it was gone. The fare was speedily provided for by the hotel clerk, and when the Duke had gained his apartments he had a suspicion. It came like a flash, and it did not in the remotest degree affect his confidence in his valet. "And yet how perfectly straightforward and upright the fellow seemed."

It was soon known about town that Kincardine had returned, and had taken a suite at the fashionable "Coburg." In a couple of days he was overrun with callers, and among them none was more intent on an interview than Jabez Pinchover, who was as excitedly full of talk as ever. He expatiated on the difficulties the Emancipator Company had experienced of late, and how deeply the absence of his Grace had been felt. "The fact is," he continued, "the directors are not quite satisfied with the management of your friend, Mr. Rowallan. Indeed, to put it mildly, they are quite dissatisfied. He has, or he says he has, tied up large sums in mines not at present productive, and he has plunged us in debt by his reckless

Digitized by Google

building scheme on the Embankment. It is imperative, I say, your Grace, absolutely imperative, if your good name and my good name are to be kept without reproach, that an immediate sale of stock take place, or that a large sum of money be loaned. Now, the only one I know of who can serve us in both regards is the wealthy man from Australia, Mr. Pitsligo Tysford, who seems to have taken a remarkable liking to yourself."

"To me?" rejoined the Duke languidly. "Why, I have never met him, and what I have read in the papers of his brag and vulgar display has not inclined me to seek his acquaintance."

"But he rented your London mansion."

"I know that, and any one else who had the money to spare could have done the same."

"Then," added Pinchover sententiously, "he paid the mortgage on your Scottish estates, and has declared that the fee never must go out of your family."

"Paid the mortgage! What are you talking about? How do you know?"

"Why, our Steamship Company in a way represent him, and when this large sum had to be sent to Scotland your agents there naturally informed us as to what was taking place."

"But what interest can he have in me?"

"That I cannot tell, your Grace, but as he evidently has, and has proven it in the most satisfactory manner, don't you owe it to yourself——?"

"Yes, yes, I see," rejoined his Grace, "as he has for some unaccountable reason bled himself freely for my sake, you would have me presume to take advantage of his simplicity and bleed him yet further for your sake and for the sake of the company. Just let me say, that I will see you, myself, the company and all its directors in the bottomless Hades before I will condescend to so contemptible an act. Good-morning."

The next day Comyn, Duke of Kincardine, had decided to call on the "parvenu," Pitsligo Tysford.

Digitized by Google

XXII

WHAT CAME OF A VISIT TO IVERNIA COTTAGE

PITSLIGO TYSFORD, not satisfied with the poverty and rascality that sought him out in his palatial dwelling, every day, guided by his friends, personally explored the haunts of suffering and crime. He went into tattered and dangerous neighbourhoods, he frequented tenements and doss houses, he ventured into narrow and dirty alleys, he visited the docks, that huge labyrinth where more human beings toil savagely and hopelessly than on any other spot of equal dimensions in civilized lands, and he inspected carefully and sorrowfully the desolate estate of the average working woman in this proud centre of Anglo-Saxon supremacy.

His age, his unassuming ways, and the presence of Miss Rowallan, who was not unknown in many destitute localities, and that of the doughty Sergeant, who went armed with a disputatious looking club, and who had a knack of detecting among ruffianly groups a member, real or imaginary, of the delectable secret order of the B. O. O. Z., or of the glorious and puissant fraternity of the A. Z. Z., were a sufficient protection. No one molested him, for no one among the thugs and outcasts of society had the least suspicion that he was a man of wealth, nor could they have been persuaded by any number of asseverations that he was that extraordinary personage whose fabulous millions were the talk of the town. So he came and went, following the bent of his inclination; so he saw and reflected.

As he returned to his magnificent domicile, viewing the procession of equipages in Rotten Row, and observing the disdain of richly caparisoned horses, the vacant

Digitized by Google

supercilious stare of grooms and footmen, and the stuffy, simpering occupants of carriages, with here and there a starchy lady fondling a wheezing, overfed, black-nosed and bandy-legged pup, he contrasted and again contrasted. Appalled by the extremes of plenty and want, of display and frugality, of unmerited repose and unrequited toil, he would retire to the stillness of his own chamber and holding in his hand the jewelled locket which brought back to him the tender vision of his only love, he would think and think and at times his thoughts would find vent in half-articulated words:

"And yet there are those who believe that it is better for society that vast fortunes should be held by a comparatively few, and should be administered by them for the advantage of the many. There are those who contend that Almighty God has chosen the rich of this world as the custodians of His bounty, and that they by a species of infallibility know what is best for the poor, and by a kind of divine right may arbitrarily decide what wage they shall receive, how many hours work, and under what conditions.

"But what an answer does the actual condition prevailing in great cities furnish to these assumptions? What are the libraries founded by the rich for the benefit of the indigent, who have no time to read, and who in many instances have had no time to learn to read; what are the missions and settlements benevolently designed to elevate the souls of those who have not been able to get beyond the necessities of the body; and what are the charities, the baskets of coal, the thin soup, the second-hand garments, the soothing tracts and sermons, in comparison with the half-starved flesh and the wholly-starved minds of the millions, who, according to this theory, are the wards of the affluent? Judged by what is seen on every hand the theory is untenable, for if it is best for the world that wealth be concentrated and not diffused, then the masses are indeed in a hopeless plight. Would it not be wise to adopt a different principle, to distribute, to spread, to place within the reach of all a modest suf-

Digitized by Google

ficiency, and let each individual be responsible for himself and for the uses to which he puts his earnings?"

Among other places visited by Pitsligo in his wanderings about the metropolis was the abode of the Youtsays, where on seeing again the sailor's wife he experienced the sensation which theosophists describe as warranting the belief in a previous state of earthly existence. He searched carefully his memory for a clew, but searched in vain. Had he known Blavatsky, he probably would have concluded that he must have met the woman a thousand or more years ago during the period of a former incarnation. He was not, however, one of the illuminati, and had not heard of such whimsical reminiscences. He could not, therefore, in any way explain his exceptional interest in Mrs. Youtsay, or account for the vague impression that her face resembled some one he had known, or was one he had seen before. She, on her part, was reticent and evaded being drawn into conversation on the subject of her own life. Her sole anxiety was for her child, and her urgency and pathetic devotion won the admiration of Angelica, who accompanied Pitsligo, and the profound respect of the millionaire himself.

The day after Orlop had rescued the Rev. Blair Hamley, whose clerical garb, though splashed and bedraggled, had betrayed his calling, Pitsligo set off again on his rambles and decided to hunt up his ship acquaintance, Foyle Shane and his little friend, Lena Shane. As he had preserved the scrawling letter Shane had sent him which gave his address in London, the cabman had no difficulty in finding the cottage. The four-wheeler contained Miss Rowallan and Dick as well as himself, and when the house was reached the party began to fear that they might be treated as intruders. Such misgivings, however, were speedily set at rest by the hearty manner of fair-dealing Mr. Shane.

For the moment he did not recognize Mr. Tysford in his genteel apparel, and occasioned some confusion by addressing Miss Angelica as Pitsligo's wife. She blushed, Pitsligo stammered an explanation, and all laughed as

Digitized by Google

they entered the cottage from which only a short time before his Grace of Kincardine, the very man the millionaire was so anxious to meet, had taken his departure. Lena, like her father, at the first did not know Pitsligo Tysford, but when after much cogitation she did succeed in identifying him, she broke forth in childish glee, clapped her hands and cried out:

"So, grand-dad, they've combed your hair, and dressed you up fine, and——" here the child caught the reproving eyes of Miss Rowallan and she came to a sudden halt. "Well," she slowly and defiantly resumed, "grand-dad knows it's true. His coat was old and his shoes were worn and the sailors wouldn't let him sleep in the steerage and no one would speak to him but me. I walked with him, and he told stories, and talked about a rich old dad who never came on deck. He was big and tall and no one could live with him in the cabin. He wore a gold crown stuck right on the top of his head, and a great-coat made of gold and lined through and through with silver."

The visitors had striven to restrain their laughter, but the climax of the child's speech was too much, and they frankly gave way to their mirth. Lena was not sure whether she ought to cry or pout. She gazed perplexedly on the merry group, but before she had made up her mind what to do, her old friend had drawn her on his knee and had commenced to fill her hands with bonbons and dolls, which he had provided and stowed away in his great-coat pockets for such an emergency.

"I am, indeed, glad to see you, sir," broke in Foyle Shane, "you were so kind to us on the end of the voyage that I somehow thought you'd come, and you can, if you will, be of great service to us now."

Pitsligo bent his head to listen, Miss Rowallan smiled significantly, as if to say—"Yes, everybody wants something,"—and Dick Gowanlock, always suspicious, as becomes a member of many secret organizations, prepared to save his over-generous master from the grasping greed of this English-tongued Irishman. Before Shane could

Digitized by Google

speak again, however, his irrepressible daughter, with her mouth half full of taffy, wiping her sticky fingers on the new coat of Mr. Tysford, interrupted impetuously:

"Say, granddad, mother's sick,—we've had a funeral —coaches—black horses—mourners—my! Then there's been a red-headed man up-stairs as was killed—no, not quite—an' we've had nurses and a pretty woman as wasn't a nurse. My! how she did take on!—and the priest—and so many other things—it's been so jolly ——" and here the candy came to the relief of the entire party by threatening the child with sweet strangulation. Pitsligo patted her on the back and saved her from so saccharriferous a fate, while her father soothed her and hinted that if little people would insist on speaking instead of listening they might expect that even lollipops would cause their undoing.

"Yes, sir, the child is right. The old creature of a mother-in-law is dead and buried. Wife is weak and ailing and something's wrong with the head. Don't know what. But doctors say she'll never be herself again, and there's a skinflint Judas of a Jew, who is trying to get this bit of property away from us. He says he has a mortgage on the cottage for more than it's worth, which was made in his favour soon after my wife's father died, when she was little more than a baby, forty years ago. He's been here every day or two threatening to turn us out——"

"And what did you do then?"

"I told him I wouldn't go. But, sir," and this was said sheepishly, "I don't want to go before the courts, and I'm afraid I made matters worse this morning, for when he was here badgering me, I lost my temper and drew a small dagger on him and declared I would stab him if he didn't leave the house." To illustrate his action and violence, he flashed before their eyes a sharp skean dhu.

The Mistress of Rowallan screamed a little, Lena huddled closer to her protector, Dick Gowanlock called on Shane to put the weapon up and not frighten folk,

Digitized by Google

and Tysford gazed steadily on the tiny bit of steel. He stretched out his hand, and asked permission to examine it, and when he had done so he became more serious than ever. He turned it round and round, and over and over; he closely inspected the cairngorn in the haft, and the half-effaced crest with the Gaelic cathghairm—"*Chlanna nan con thigibh a so's*——" the rest illegible—on the worn blade, and his face took on an expression of troubled surprise. He still held the skean dhu and still surveyed it as he addressed himself to Shane:

"How did it come into your possession?"

Promptly the answer came: "I found it."

"Found it! But where?"

Before Shane could explain, for he seemed about to fabricate a story, Lena, who had just disposed of a nectarious comfit, started up and exclaimed:

"Oh, that's the young lady's. She let me play with it in her room."

"Silence, you chatterbox," angrily replied the father.

"What lady?" simultaneously asked Pitsligo and Angelica.

With the hesitancy of one who fears he may commit himself, and of one who is conscious that there is that in his life he does not care to have investigated, Foyle Shane made reply:

"I tell you I found it, a long while ago—in the street. Where? That's my own affair. If the young woman who was here showed it to Lena she must have taken it out of one of the drawers. These girls are always prying round and going where they have no business to go."

"But, dad——" interposed Lena.

"Silence! Children should be seen and not heard." He scowled at her, and she turned her face away and hid it in the folds of Pitsligo's overcoat. "As for the young woman who was here, I know nothing about her. I saw her first of all in front of the cottage talking with Lena, and she went and searched out the parson for the old woman. She didn't tell me her name, and I didn't ask her, but I did hear her tell the preacher that she was

Digitized by Google

called Sibilla Mac something or other—Scotch or Irish, I suppose."

"Sibilla!" echoed Pitsligo and Angelica by a common impulse.

"Yes; Sibilla! I remember very well, for I thought the name odd like. But the Mac part of the name didn't reach me."

"Are you sure," inquired Angelica, "that it was not Macgillivray?"

"Can't say that it sounded that way. I tell you I was too far off to hear distinctly."

"Listening!" suggested Gowanlock in the most matter-of-fact way, as though to pry and eavesdrop were the ordinary occupation of mankind beyond the pale of secret orders. Shane turned on him savagely and retorted:

"None of your business. A man ought to know what's going on in his own house." He looked about him in that honest kind of way of his which had served him so well in various questionable circumstances. Pitsligo, though deeply interested and moved by what might only be a strange coincidence was not inclined to push his inquiries further, particularly when they might only provoke evasions. Therefore, for the sake of all parties he thought it best to drop the subject for the present.

"Shane, I have taken a fancy to this relic of the Highlands. For how much will you sell it?"

"I don't want to sell it, Mr. Tysford," he answered in a surly tone of voice.

"Oh, yes, you do," Pitsligo responded good-humouredly. "There, I will give you £10, that will buy you a whole arsenal of arms." He pushed the note into Shane's seemingly reluctant hands, and then, the better to stifle the expected remonstrance, he continued: "By the way, let us return to the Jew and the mortgage. You can rely on me to help you. Send him with all the papers,—still better, come with him yourself to where I dwell, and I've no doubt we shall be able to adjust matters to your satisfaction and his. Who is this conscienceless money-lender?"

Digitized by Google

"He is called Ichabod Raphiel."

"Indeed, an old acquaintance of mine, and—never mind. Bring him along with you just the same. And, now, we must be going." Lena cuddled closer to him. "Yes, Lena, child, it is time for granddad to be in his own lodging. But you must come and see me when your father does. There, now, you mustn't cry. I'll send you some pretty toys to-morrow." Gently disengaging himself from the child he followed his companions who had gone before to the four-wheeler. As he crossed the narrow space between the garden wall and the house Foyle Shane laid his hand on his arm and whispered:

"Do you remember the warning I sent you in my steamer letter?"

"Yes, but the Larrikins can't frighten me."

"And yet they mean to do you harm if you fall into their clutches."

"They have threatened me before; but I have never wronged any one and I do not fear."

"Still, be on your guard; for when they make up their minds to strike, they may bide their time, but the time is sure to come at last."

Pitsligo replied, "I am not unfamiliar with their evil repute. I know them in the main to be a body of miscreants, old convicts, or the descendants of convicts formerly transported from England to the antipodes, who have banded themselves for purposes nefarious and sometimes political, and I know that they often select as the victims of their savagery men who are upright and public-spirited; for to be marked for destruction by the Larrikins is usually a certificate of good character. But you have not told me how it happens that an honest man like yourself is so intimate with their villainous schemes."

"And I can't satisfy your curiosity. Perhaps I overheard some of the members of this secret order talking on the subject; or perhaps——"

"You yourself have been initiated into their mysteries?"

Digitized by Google

"Perhaps, but more of this at a better time; only remember," Shane added impressively, "I warned you—never forget that."

"And I am not ungrateful," replied Pitsligo, as he finally separated from the lord of Ivernia Cottage.

On reaching his splendid abode at the West End, it was hardly necessary for Pitsligo to explain to the Mistress of Rowallan the interest he had taken in the skean dhu. Since their reunion he had been so fully under her influence that he rarely took a step without consulting her, and it was therefore only natural, when they were alone, that he should disclose what thoughts had occurred to him on handling the ancient weapon. She had, however, understood it all, and needed no enlightenment. As the sheath of the skean dhu had been unexpectedly brought to light, so in a manner even more surprising had the blade turned up, and now, as Pitsligo putting the one in the other contemplated them both, she, like himself, saw that another link had been added to a chain whose ultimate end neither of them could anticipate.

The more they talked over the affair the more intent they became on the discovery of the young woman, whose name, Sibilla, recalled another Sibilla long since turned to dust, who nearly half a century gone had restored this same weapon to Duke Angus.

And yet was it worth while to seek her out? What advantage could accrue? Doubtless the girl would confirm Lena's story and convict Shane of falsehood. What then? If she claimed the skean dhu as hers, it might turn out that it had come into her possession through thievery, or by accident, and no light be thrown on its whereabouts through so many years. It might be as impossible to follow its fortunes as it would be to follow the career of a shilling minted in the reign of William IV. And when Angelica and Pitsligo had reasoned conclusively in this manner instead of forbearing to search for the girl, they illogically determined to do what they had decided not to attempt.

Digitized by Google

The confidences exchanged between the Master of Millions and the Mistress of Rowallan on this weighty theme, were only symptomatic of the close intimacy into which they had come since their meeting in Scotland. They were rarely apart. He consulted her, she watched over him. His every want was anticipated, his every mood was studied. She relieved him of manifold disturbing cares. Intuitively she understood him, and clearly perceived and appreciated his personal worth. Her gentle nature responded to his, and her heart went out to him with loyal affection.

His ingenuousness, his simplicity, his trustfulness, his magnanimity and the poetic quality of his character, appealed to her and she counted it a joy to render him the homage of her service. She coveted his good opinion, even his love, and instinctively, in her own sweet, quiet, unobstrusive way, surrounded him with an atmosphere of home and friendship. She refrained from accepting gifts. He was perpetually urging her to take large sums of money for her philanthropic work,—for herself. She invariably declined, for she had determined that no suspicion of mercenary aims should taint her sincere desire to promote his happiness.

On his part Pitsligo, without being really conscious of what had come over him, continually sought the company of Angelica, delighted in her talk, craved her approval, deferred to her judgment, coveted her smile, and opened his heart to her regarding the solicitude he felt for the wise and righteous disposal of his wealth. The domestics and Miss Olympia Pinchover, who had become a member of the household, observing the aged couple closely, regarded them as an example of what a husband and wife should be after fifty years of domestic felicity, courteous and mutually considerate and gracious. The fair and dazzling Olympia, however, had her own opinion, and that not a complimentary one, of an old woman who in this bare-faced way was setting her cap to capture a man for the sake of his money.

Yet had she known all, she would have seen how little

Digitized by Google

cause she had for jealousy, as little, indeed, as she had for hope. For Pitsligo Tysford, notwithstanding his dependence on, and unmistakable reverence and attachment for, Angelica, when alone, especially at night as he contemplated the soft sheen of the winter stars, would fondly recall another face on whose alabaster brow could be traced no sign of furrow from the plough of time, and in whose luxurious hair could be detected no silvery prophecy of approaching age. And often, then a girlish form was with him once again, and young eyes beamed lovingly on him and his own eyes would fill with the mist of tears, as his trembling lips would whisper—*Servabo fidem.*

Digitized by Google

XXIII

THE WISE WAYS OF A SORDID WORLD

"MR. TYSFORD," inquired Dick Gowanlock the day after their visit to the cottage, "may I be so bold as to ask why you have never joined one of our magnanimous secret orders?"

The worthy Sergeant had not been able to visit Gower Street since the time he had there heard of Tina's remarkable fortune. Neither had he intruded on Tina. He had not accompanied Pitsligo when the millionaire had visited her at Lancaster Gate, and as yet she had not returned the visit. With rare delicacy of feeling, yet not so strange in a man of Dick's chivalrous spirit, he had never intimated in the presence of Pitsligo that he had met and known the young lady whom the Master of Rowallan had claimed as his daughter.

Moreover, there was a touch of pride in the Sergeant's reticence. How did he know that this rich young woman would care to be recognized by a former acquaintance as humble as himself? He would not embarrass her. Only if he should chance to meet her by herself, my, would he not then extend the glad hand and give her sign and word of friendly cheer. So the old fighter kept his own counsel, and venerating and loving his rich and kindly-disposed chief, was sincerely solicitous for his well-being. Hence his desire to have him number himself among the many professed practical mystics of modern times.

Pitsligo, replying to his interrogatory, said: "Perhaps if my life had been spent in cities and where what is called civilization prevails, I might have regarded as necessary to my protection membership in one or more secret orders. In communities hostile to justice, to truth,

Digitized by Google

to virtue, where the rights of the individual are constantly imperilled, comradeship with others of like mind, confirmed by solemn pledges probably is indispensable to safety."

"You seem, sir, to have a poor idea of civilization."

"Not at all. I have only the idea which the teachings and practices of these fraternities warrant. Secret societies in the days of the Roman Empire and of the Middle Ages were instituted to shield certain classes from oppression, and to afford aid to those who were the victims of tyranny. When we find them flourishing in this age they pronounce on civilization, not I. They say in effect that barbarism, injustice, and the insufficiency, inefficiency, and possibly the corruption of the courts, compel them to combine together for their personal security. Every body of men who think it necessary to organize and to hedge themselves roundabout by pledges and oaths, to a certain extent criticise, if they do not condemn, the moral condition of the outside community."

"But," expostulated Dick seriously and sadly, "you mustn't forget that these sublime orders are kept alive for the sake of charity. Think of the money they give away."

"There, there, my faithful friend, I am not disputing their serviceableness to the poor in such times as these, when it seems to me the financiers and the great captains of industry are adopting methods which must ultimately impoverish the mass while temporarily they enrich the few, and which make the mass unduly dependent and the few unduly and unreasonably imperious. If your societies give more than they spend on themselves, on splendid asylums, regalias, feasts and luxurious pilgrimages, then their existence is all right, and if I lived here and were not as old as I am, I might attach myself to their fellowship."

"I'm sure you would, sir," replied Dick, a trifle more cheerfully. "I'm sure you would!"

"And yet," continued Pitsligo, dubiously, and as if debating with himself, "I do not see why I should wear a cocked hat with a feather, and a toy sword, and a be-

Digitized by Google

ribboned apron, and bind myself with oaths, for the sake of doing my fellow-beings a kindly act." Then, as he saw into what depths of distress his reflections had plunged his companion, he added soothingly, "I think I should have joined, nevertheless, particularly could I have been proposed by one as brave and honest as yourself."

"Thank you, sir," replied the mollified Sergeant, "for your good opinion. And rest assured, sir, I'll do all in my power to deserve it." And he saluted.

"I have no doubt of that. But now we must attend to business. Where's Miss Rowallan?"

"She's gone to the East End to help some girls who are in trouble."

"Rightly is she named The Angel."

"Mr. Jabez Pinchover and Mr. Amos Odlum, sir, desire to see you," an ornate lackey impressively announced, and the gentlemen thus heralded immediately entered the room accompanied by Miss Olympia.

Since his last visit to the millionaire, his gifted and willowy daughter had kept her consequential and buoyant parent informed of what was transpiring beneath the hereditary roof-tree of the Kincardines; that is, as far as she understood the course of events. She had reported the sway which the Mistress of Rowallan had established over the mind of Pitsligo Tysford; had discoursed eloquently, if not charitably, on the motives of the aged and cunning enchantress; had also dilated on the generous and lavish things that were to be done for young Miss Rowallan, in whom, for reasons she had been unable to ascertain, the venerable gentleman,—who, to her, seemed to be bordering on second childhood, and who really needed the care of a young wife,—took a most extravagant interest. Neither had she in her communications refrained from commenting freely, if not generously, on the personal appearance and ways of this singularly fortunate maiden, whom she described as ungainly, timid, restless, ill at ease in polite society, shivering with fear in the presence of her father and governess, a strong, impudent female, answering almost every question addressed

Digitized by Google

to her with a stupid "Ooh!" and yet as sufficiently acute to cling to the patriarchal Pactolus from whom she was to inherit enormous possessions.

"Well, well, my dear Mr. Tysford, here we are again, you see. No getting rid of us; but we will be off in a minute or two, as soon as we ascertain if we can be of service to you in the city. We want you to use us, and still to use us," exclaimed the genial and vivacious Pinchover, with a surplusage and supererogation of assurances.

"You are always welcome," replied Mr. Tysford, measuring his words. "It is neighbourly in you to call. I am such poor company that it is an act of real benevolence for any one to visit me."

Mr. Pinchover protested against this self-depreciation, in which Miss Olympia prettily joined. Mr. Amos Odlum, however, in view of his own importance as the head of the "Sovereign Steamship Company, Limited," on whose shoulders in these degenerate days also rested the burden of management, thought this lowly self-disesteem was in all the circumstances no more than becoming. Miss Olympia was not quite clear whether the venerable Australian was quizzing them or not.

"There, there, now, my dear Mr. Tysford," replied the flowery and showy Jabez, "don't talk in that depressing manner. How can one who has gained so much, who has, so to speak, discovered the philosopher's stone, whose very touch, if I may say so, like to that of—what's his name? the gentleman with the long ears—what do you call him?"

"An ass?" dryly suggested Pitsligo.

"No, far from it," and there was a tone of horror in his voice at the bare mention of such a thing. "No, Midas. That's right, daughter, I believe. You are up in the classics and that kind of thing." She nodded. "Well, as I was saying, how can one who has been away from the marts of trade, and who has been able, as you have, sir, in the wilderness, in the lonely places, and in the wastes where the savage sons of nature, and the primeval—primeval—ahem! primeval—well, never mind,

Digitized by Google

—able to coin gold out of the stones, yes, I repeat it, out of the very stones—consider himself unworthy the warmest friendship and the most ardent devotion of his fellow-beings."

By this time the florid speaker had brought his gloved hand to rest gracefully on his shirt bosom, without rumpling it, over that particular spot where his heart was supposed to be thrilling with emotion; and much farther his vapouring would have carried him, had not his flow of eloquence been stayed by the remonstrance of the abashed Pitsligo.

"Do not, I pray you," responded that long-suffering mortal, "embarrass me. My own deliberate judgment is that the man who lives merely for the sake of making money, and who exalts money in a nation above manhood, is rightly satirized by the myth of Midas as entitled to wear the ears of an ass. And do you know, when men speak of my wealth, and only of that, I involuntarily put my hands to my ears and wonder what kind of ears my neighbours see. Please let us change the subject. How is your excellent wife?"

"Amaryllis, charming Amaryllis, a remarkable woman, sir, very remarkable. I am sorry to say that she is not up to the mark this morning. For several days she has been dejected and ailing, and I left her in bed."

"I am sorry to hear that she is ill."

"No, sir, not ill. She resents the imputation. She suffers from shortness of breath, from palpitation of the heart, and from loss of appetite, but she insists that she can't be ill, as there can be no such thing as illness. All imagination, only imagination! When you die and are buried it is imagination as well—except the funeral expenses."

"Then," answered Pitsligo, "the good lady finds it hard to imagine herself well. May I trouble you to present my respectful regards, and to say how sorrowful I feel to learn of her disordered mind."

"Disordered mind!" repeated the little company. "Why, what do you mean, Mr. Tysford?"

Digitized by Google

"Nothing rude or discourteous, believe me. I admit that I belong to the exoteric class, and am not privileged to speak. But if fevers, consumptions and other diseases are not real, and are only mental illusions, then is it not fair to describe them as mental disorders? If the body is not diseased, then the mind must be to imagine so impossible a thing."

Pitsligo looked as solemn as death while he indulged in this philosophic strain, and spoke with matter-of-fact distinctness. Those who heard him, as they were not converts to the therapeutical theories of the fair and fat Amaryllis, could no longer refrain from an outburst of laughter. The unseemly noise quite startled the sense of propriety in the bosom of Miss Olympia, though she herself had contributed her part towards its creation. With tears of delight deluging her cheeks, she cried: "For mercy's sake, stop, or the footmen will imagine that our minds are disordered too. My, what would my blessed incorporeal and extra-mundane mamma say to Mr. Tysford now?"

"I hope," replied Pitsligo meekly, "that I haven't given offense. If I have I shall never forgive myself."

"Tut, tut," answered Jabez, "you can't give offense—think of such a thing, a man worth unnumbered millions! I assure you, sir, that's impossible. And then, sir, you are a Briton. I repeat it, sir, and I defy any one to contradict me, you are a Briton. Absence has not deprived you of that dignity, and of that which goes with it, the right to speak one's mind—to speak it everywhere, everywhere—even in the presence of the partner of one's bosom. Sir, when the partner of my bosom attempts, which to her honour be it said, Amaryllis rarely does, to suppress my freedom of speech, remembering that I am a Briton, I always put my foot down and assert——"

"Ahem!" cynically coughed Olympia, while the rest of the company found it difficult to refrain from expressions of amused incredulity.

Amos Odlum, absorbed in the contemplation of his own weighty importance to a foolish, boggling and

Digitized by Google

floundering world, had paid little attention to the trivialities of the passing show. But now, somewhat explosively, he interposed:

"I ought to say, Mr. Tysford, that our friend Pinchover, there, confessing his own limitations, consulted me on the subject of your benefactions. He told me that you were seeking counsel from men of sagacity as to the best method of dispensing your vast wealth, and naturally he came to me."

Pitsligo bowed slightly and inclined his head forward as though anxious not to miss any of the speaker's golden words. Amos Odlum immensely gratified by this show of deference waxed garrulous:

"I have given considerable thought to the subject; and when I say that, though I perhaps ought not to say it, I have given of that which is so unduly taxed by the people around me that I have not very much left for outside investment. I make myself clear?"

Again Pitsligo bowed, his face in the meanwhile expressionless. The jerky, complacent speaker continued: "But the little that I have, if not great in quantity, I may, without immodesty, having passed through more remarkable experiences than befall ordinary men, assert is not inferior in quality—do you follow me?—I cheerfully devote to your service. Were I in your place I would devote several millions for the endowment of metropolitan national churches, which would relieve future generations of Christians from the necessity of giving, and would tend to put an end to Nonconformity, which I am compelled regretfully to confess has been countenanced by my partner, Mr. Pinchover, a man in other respects, and," deepening his voice to solemn severity, "I must say it to his face, is worthy of some degree of consideration." Waving aside the attempt of Jabez to get in a word or two of remonstrance, the orator continued: "You must surely see the advantage of this scheme. As professors of religion increase in wealth, their obligation to pay out money for others would diminish to the vanishing point, and they would have

Digitized by Google

more to spend on themselves. This arrangement would go farther than the plans of the Lambeth Conference towards the reunion of Christendom; for dissenters would gradually come to see the futility of opposing a church that not only monopolizes the fashion of the country, but has no need of pew rents or contributions, and never makes nagging and distressing appeals for missions. I hope I am not too deep for you to understand me perfectly."

Once more Pitsligo intimated by the bowing of his head his comprehension and appreciation.

"There, there, I am glad I am not mistaken. Mr. Pinchover warned me that you might not be able to follow me, but I thought differently. It seemed to me that a man of your years, and one who had wandered so far and had gathered so much, would not be unlikely to see through a millstone with a hole in it." He smiled at the appositeness of his figurative speech. "This point, then, we will consider as settled. You will endow the Church with, say about twenty million of pounds."

"Or forty," drily suggested Olympia.

"Yes, I accept the amendment, Miss Olympia, but we must not demand too much for the Church. Undue possessions might make her worldly. Then there is another great scheme which I am convinced will command the approval of our benevolent friend, and which will require thirty or fifty millions for its successful execution. I lay awake all night trying to invent a name for it, and suddenly it came to me. How do you like it? 'The Millionaires' Self-Protective and Self-Remunerative Benevolent Association.' I tell you there is nothing to compare with the title, and the idea back of it is absolutely original, and is thoroughly Scriptural, for it is grounded on the text: 'To him that hath, to him it shall be given.' Do you anticipate me, sir?"

Pitsligo admitted that he could not, and the others, observing Odlum's triumphant air, gratified and inflated him yet farther, by confessing their obtuseness likewise.

"No, I really did not expect you to rise at once to the

Digitized by Google

level of my great conception. But do try and follow me. I know it will tax you; but you ought to consent to be taxed."

Olympia somewhat irrelevantly remarked: "Taxes were usually imposed in England whether one consented or not."

"You see, my idea is this," Odlum resumed, oblivious to the comment of Olympia and apparently oblivious to her presence, "to combine the capitalists and captains of industry into an association and attempt to make life more endurable for them. The nation owes them a great deal. They have developed and generally appropriated to themselves its resources. Still they are not happy. They have earned enough to build castles, to multiply residences, to surround themselves with luxuries and objects of art, and they have many carriages and more servants, but they see clearly that they are not rewarded according to their merits. They should have more.

"They are annoyed by the unreasonable grumbling of work-people, who complain against the hours of labour, who desire more time for self-improvement and to spend with their families, and who are continually protesting that their wages are not sufficient and that consequently their children are compelled to seek employment before they are old enough to leave their schooling. This you must admit is very irritating, and if there is no way of ending it our rich leaders of industry may throw up their business, and cease their endeavours to bless the land through their patriotic devotion to their own pecuniary interests. I propose to avert this calamity by my contemplated association. I unite these broad-minded employers in one society, and endow it with, say, fifty million sterling, from which sum they would be able to draw annually, and apply the money to the wages of their people; not, however, to increase their present pay, but only to lighten the financial burden of the employer, who in this way would be reconciled to the arduous duty of continuing to

Digitized by Google

grow rich at his country's expense. Do you fathom my meaning?"

The same inscrutable face was turned towards the speaker, and the voice of Pitsligo answered: "Yes, I am gradually sinking to your depths."

"It has also occurred to me," Odlum, taking a fresh start, remarked, "that we might do something for that increasing class of young men, born of wealthy parents and unfitted by birth, training and taste for serious occupations, who can't work and won't work. What a noble benefaction it would be to found and plentifully endow a 'Do Nothing Club,' where these gentlemen of leisure could spend their time, eating, drinking and playing, having no anxiety for to-morrow or the day after either. I am sure they would be eternally grateful, and would rear a statue to the founder of the club out of the funds set apart for its maintenance."

"And," mildly inquired Pitsligo Tysford, "would you not include in your comprehensive scheme some provision for sewing girls, for shop girls, for broken down artisans and those who are too old or too sick to earn their own living?"

Apparently astounded at the shallowness of such a question Odlum replied testily: "Too much is being done for these worthless people already. Such girls as these had better remain at home and care for the baby, and these mechanics and labourers ought to lay aside something from their weekly wages against a rainy day and not fall back on those who have been so good as to furnish them work through many, many years. I am surprised, and more than surprised, I may say grieved, that a man of your discernment, Mr. Tysford, should fail to see that to spend money on these low-bred people is as bad as, if not worse than, to waste it in riotous living."

"Indeed, I never thought of that."

"No, of course not. Why should you, Mr. Tysford? You have not lived here, and do not understand the rapaciousness of the lower orders. You will hardly believe me when I tell you that they spend part of their

Digitized by Google

pay on tobacco, beer, cheap theatres and vulgar sports. Were they sufficiently refined to patronize the opera, smoke Havanas, drink champagne, and attend the clubs, they might be tolerated. But to demand money for the gratification of such animal tastes is an outrage on decency and Christian charity."

Pitsligo bowed his head once more—now somewhat wearily—and was silent. Amos Odlum was immensely pleased with himself, and was convinced that his superior wisdom had deprived the rich man of the power of utterance. He thrust his hands into his trousers pockets, usually a sign of masculine self-satisfaction, and looked on the little company with the air of a conqueror. But he was prevented from further enlightening his host by the reappearance of the gorgeous lackey, who announced with due solemnity: "His Grace, the Duke of Kincardine." As this was the only opportunity the servant had ever had of announcing his own master, he performed the task with due pomposity, and with all the choking, sepulchral gravity of an undertaker inviting the mourning friends "to view the remains." His manner and the entrance of the Duke startled the visitors, and brought them suddenly to their feet, and with them, though with less haste, Pitsligo Tysford himself.

Acknowledging the expansive smile of Pinchover, the deeper reverence of Odlum, and bowing gallantly to Miss Olympia, the young nobleman advanced to where his remarkable tenant was standing. Their eyes met with that trusty, straightforward gaze, which is so delightful to sincere souls. The Duke extended his hand frankly and with all the hearty equalizing freedom of youth, and it was grasped firmly, as by one who appreciated an unexpected honour. From that moment they were friends. The soldierly bearing of the Duke, his open countenance, his thick clustering red hair, his lofty forehead, his firm-set handsome mouth, notwithstanding a trifling discolouration of the skin which betokened a somewhat recent undignified encounter, appealed to the chivalrous nature of the old Australian, and an indescrib-

Digitized by Google

able charm about the Australian captivated the fancy of the young Scotchman.

"I have been away from the heart of things for a few days, but on my return as soon as it was proper to leave my room," and laughingly the Duke touched the bruised part of his face as though he had nothing to conceal, "I have hastened to pay my respects and welcome you to London."

"It is very kind of your lordship to think of me. Let me thank you for permitting me to occupy your town house. It would have gratified me yet more if on your return to the city you had come direct to your own home, and had taken possession of your apartments. They are now at your disposal, and if you should see fit to dwell there, I shall be favoured, and I can promise that I will not intrude on your privacy."

Pitsligo spoke in his modest, quiet way, and the Duke was more and more impressed by his retiring and unpretentious manner, and wondered how on earth the newspapers could have described him as a vainglorious, ill-bred, boorish specimen of the cheap plutocrat.

"Ah, you are the one who transcends us all in courtesy. You rent this house—there, now, do not wince at my bluntness, for all the town knows that I have opened its doors to you for monetary considerations—and you invite me to take up my abode beneath its roof, and I can hardly conceive of a more delicate instance of hospitality."

"Do not shame me, sir, and if I have presumed, forgive me." The old man really looked distressed and his forlorn state affected deeply the Red Comyn.

"Shame you! not for worlds. And it may be, especially if you surround yourself with such charming company," and here he glanced in the direction of Miss Olympia, "I may be bold enough to accept your invitation."

That glance was not lost on the brilliant authoress, who had never seen the Duke before, and who on the moment was conscientiously satisfied that she would make a magnificent Duchess.

Digitized by Google

"I called, however, not merely to greet you, Mr. Tysford, but for the purpose of a brief business talk. There, there, now," seeing that the other visitors were preparing to leave, "do not hurry on my account. I can look in to-morrow just as well, whenever it suits Mr. Tysford's convenience."

"Gracious goodness, how thoughtless in you, Odlum, and how inconsiderate in myself, not to have excused ourselves at once, especially as we have business in the city—important business—and we ought to have been in our office long ago. But Mr. Tysford is so interesting in his conversation that he entrances and holds us with hooks of steel and prevents us from realizing the flight of time. And then, your Grace, we are so glad to see you back again—that, that—— Oh! let me present my daughter, Miss Pinchover—and really apologize that we have tarried beyond the limits of propriety." Thus, and with many more words, the flustered and jaunty Pinchover made his peace with the neglected goddess Etiquette. His Grace enjoyed the consternation of the consequential Jabez, and urged him not to be so punctilious as to hasten away on his account. His pleadings, however, failed to produce the desired effect, and with a profusion of polite fibs and courteous insincerities the earlier visitors withdrew—the men bustling towards Bishopsgate Street, the young lady gliding as gracefully as possible, wondering whether she had not inflicted a mortal wound upon a ducal heart, in the direction of her own apartment, leaving the Red Comyn master of the situation.

"I fear that my coming has somewhat disconcerted our friends and has been inopportune."

Pitsligo slowly and gravely shook his head, smiled faintly and in a reassuring way, and after he and the Duke had resumed their chairs, remarked: "Mr. Odlum has been giving me the benefit of his wisdom as to the wisest method of disposing of inconvenient and burdensome cash, and I think he had completed his reflections on the subject before you arrived."

Digitized by Google

"May I, without being suspected of rudeness, suggest, from what has come to my knowledge, that a judicious mentor might not prove unserviceable in preventing an unwise expenditure of money?"

"I do not perceive your meaning," replied Pitsligo, "or to what you refer."

"I refer, for instance, to my own case," and the Duke repeated for substance what Jabez had told him. "For the life of me I cannot see how you could waste your money more ill-advisedly. When, think you, shall I be able to refund what you have advanced? and how even can I express my gratitude for the favour you have shown me, a stranger to you, and, for all you know a conscienceless scamp of an aristocrat?"

The old man's face lighted up pleasantly, and he answered: "Do not disturb yourself about favours or refunding. I have no need of the money, and I'm glad to be quit of it, and I trust there is no ground for the slander you bring against yourself."

"Do you not see how impossible it is for a man in my position to accept a gratuity, or to permit himself to be placed under an obligation which he may never have the means of discharging?"

"Do you have any confidence in the Mistress of Rowallan?" queried Pitsligo.

"What, in Miss Angelica, my grandfather's ward, my mother's friend? Why, I would trust her with my life, with more than my life—my honour."

"Very good. Trust her. She knows what motives govern my conduct towards yourself and your affairs, and my conduct has her approval. By and by, perhaps in a few days, she will tell you all, and then you will learn that your dignity and the dignity of your house are in no way compromised by what I have done or may do. Wait! Trust her. I do not say trust me, but trust her as your own mother would."

"No other path is open to me, and yet——"

"May I ask," resumed Pitsligo, "a favour in return for my interest in your welfare?"

Digitized by Google

"Yes, what?"

"Resign your position as chairman of the 'Emancipator Mining and Building Company, Limited.'"

"I am perfectly willing to do so, but wherefore?"

"The Company is doomed. Your social standing and your name were used to influence business men to entertain the project, and your rank has been freely used to induce hundreds of people, whose means are moderate, to invest their little savings. Now, from the information I have received I'm satisfied that the funds have been mismanaged, and that a crash is inevitable. And I want you, for the sake of the name you bear, to withdraw before the catastrophe which will carry multitudes down to financial wreck and ruin."

The young man rose from his seat, and leaning on the back of his chair, looked Pitsligo steadily in the eye, and with a slight tremour in his voice, exclaimed:

"What do you take me for?" No answer from Pitsligo. "What would you say to a Scottish chief who had gathered the lowly clansmen round his banner, and, then, when he saw that an overwhelming foe must scatter and crush his loyal adherents, discreetly abandoned them to their fate and availed himself of the opportunity to save himself?"

"I would call him a poltroon."

"Thank you for the explicit answer. Believe me, I have no intention of acting in such a way as to justify you or others in applying this term to my unworthy self. If I have unintentionally helped to create a financial bubble, which in bursting will prove a veritable deluge, then let me share the fate of those whom I have misled. I prefer honour to safety; and he who in these circumstances would act otherwise is as much a coward and a despicable cur as the man who forsakes an imperilled command in the day of battle. And, let me add, not until elementary soldierly virtues control the business world will it be redeemed from the baseness and pusillanimity by which it is at present disgraced." The young man expressed himself hotly, and with a touch

Digitized by Google

of scorn in the tones of his voice, as though he were suspecting that Pitsligo himself was not free from the moral taint polluting mercantile circles.

"Well, I am not sorry you feel as you do," rejoined Pitsligo tranquilly, "and I see you must be rescued from your dilemma in some other way. I am not sorry, I repeat, for it is clear proof to me that you would not shame any man, however lowly, nor any maiden, however confiding and unprotected."

"You employ a strange form of speech, sir, for surely the more helpless a girl is the higher her claim on a gentleman for respectful consideration and safety."

"True, it ought always to be so, but unhappily there are many exceptions to the rule. And I have been told of one lately, which I can scarcely credit, as the chief actor in the alleged betrayal is the scion of an ancient and noble family——" Pitsligo's sentence was arrested by the abrupt entrance of the inevitable gilded flunkey, who, in tones that betokened his profound abasement over the announcement he was now compelled to make, called out the name:

"Mr. Orlop Youtsay."

The Duke and the millionaire looked curiously and inquisitively at each other.

"Show him up," Pitsligo ordered, and added: "Do not leave, your Grace, I would like you to meet my old friend. You will be interested in him, for it is his daughter who is reputed to have abandoned home and honour."

"If, sir, you mean Miss Fiona Youtsay," the Red Comyn replied stiffly, "she may have turned her back on her family, but she has not departed from honour."

Digitized by Google

XXIV

A JEALOUS WOMAN'S RUTHLESS VENGEANCE

THALIA THESPERIUS was in a fiery and implacable mood. Melpomene, the daughter of Jupiter and Mnemosyne, wearing a buskin and holding a dagger, was never haunted by more tragic and deadly thoughts than was this much-abused and long-suffering representative of the player's art.

At the theatre she scolded the supers so tartly, satirized the actors, from the heavy father to the sweet *ingénue*, so mercilessly, and nagged and tormented poor Pierette so capriciously, that she had become the talk of the green-room and the *désespoir* of her French maid.

Unaccustomed to self-introspection, the popular tragédienne did not undertake to determine how much of this excruciating agony of hers and revengeful temper were histrionic and artificial and how much was genuine to the core. It is one of the penalties paid by Thespian artistes for success that they must, to some degree, sacrifice their own personality and often be in doubt as to the true character of their own feelings.

It never occurred to Thalia Thesperius that she might be acting as sincerely off the stage as she did when she trod the boards, and that her real emotions were less deep and painful than she imagined. It was enough for her to know that she was in the position of a woman who had twice been duped by the same man, that she had discovered his perfidy, that he had insulted her by permitting her to find out that he had both wife and child, and that any female similarly situated in a well-conducted drama would wring her hands, stride impatiently up and down, and would finally bring her heartless betrayer to justice. This was the rôle which circumstances called on

Digitized by Google

Thalia to play, and she was playing it as conscientiously as she would have undertaken any other part.

Several days had passed since she had sympathized with Nancy Gowanlock and had encouraged her to expose the miser who must have made away with her brother. She had heard of Mitchie Carfrae's success in bringing over the Jew to the side of justice, and yet nothing had been done to crush the villain, as other actors in the drama had concluded that a brief delay would render the dénouement more complete.

While Thalia was too good an actress to spoil a telling and effective "situation," she had grown impatient. She had expected to strike Rowallan through the blow aimed at Pitsligo Tysford, and she longed for the hour when she could declaim in the presence of her deceiver the withering speech she had already rehearsed: "Vile wretch, who blighted my affections while I was yet a girl and only a walking lady, who after years of absence returned and cast yourself at my feet and implored me to forget and forgive, who once more imposed on my innocence and secured from me the promise to accept heart, hand and fortune, and then, tempted by the ill-gotten gold of this venerable caitiff, miscreant and malefactor, reclaimed a daughter you had abandoned, acknowledged a wife you had disowned, and cut me loose and send me 'whistling down the wind'! See the avenger! Behold Nancy Gowanlock! The reprobate for whose money you have sinned is a murderer! He will be hanged! His wealth will be confiscated for the benefit of the woman he has wronged! Never a farthing of it will be yours. Ah! ah! such is the doom of the betrayer! Avaunt!"

Pierette Charmartan was a discreet young woman. She knew how to keep her own counsel, and how to hold her tongue, and, for the whole truth must be told, how to loose it when necessary. Up to the present she had never intimated to Thesperius that she had seen either Rowallan or Carfrae before she came to dwell in Gower Street. There had been no excuse for her to talk. The old gentleman was evidently rich, and would doubtless

Digitized by Google

show his appreciation of her silence in a tangible way; and as for the young gentleman, he was no worse than other youths who patronized her father's place and who were intent on sowing wild oats.

Since they had again met Mitchie had not in public referred to the past, and yet by a few gracious familiarities in private, which might mean much or nothing, had proven that by him it was not forgotten. But now that her mistress was so upset and distressed might it not be her duty to tell all? If her mistress only knew what she knew she could dictate terms and take what vengeance she pleased on this faithless and profligate greybeard. Were she to know that this aged deceiver, who now rides in his carriage, who resides at Lancaster Gate, and who can afford every luxury and can lavish on favourites and parasites expensive gifts, only two years ago was impecunious, a frequenter of pool-rooms and gambling resorts, a player who knew exactly how and when to win, who had trapped inexperienced young men into losses which had driven them to crime, and who had even affronted a young girl by his preposterous flatteries, she could threaten him with exposure; and, if she desired to punish him in that way, could rob him of his good name and reputation, or if she preferred it, could mulct him in such heavy damages as would effectually repair her shattered affections and leave him little for further ostentation and roguery. The idea pleased Pierette more and more. She began to sing. Her voice charmed her on and finally decided her to act. She ascended the stairs and entered her mistress's chamber:

"Pierette," for such was the greeting that awaited her, "*vous etes bien en retard aujourd'hui.*"

"*Pardonez moi, Madam; J'avais envie de venier plus tôt.*"

Two hours elapsed and not a sound escaped the close-locked room. Nancy Gowanlock in vain attempted to gain access on business of her own. She was politely but positively refused admission, and hastened to drown her rising wrath in a friendly glass. Mistress and maid

Digitized by Google

were absorbed in discussing the affairs of Rowallan, and would not be interrupted. The two women talked, whispered and muttered in French, diversified by a few English expletives when they came handy and were more forceful, and they were both intent, alert, impassioned and increasingly vindictive, or in the white heat to which they had brought themselves, imagined that they were. At last the conference ended, and Thalia went so far as to kiss Pierette on the cheek, a fearful omen of a deadly compact.

A little later, a cab having been whistled for by the new girl, Jamie, whose ear had just been nicely pinched by Nancy Gowanlock in the interest of domestic discipline, Thalia Thesperius sallied forth arrayed in a heavy black gown, cloaked in sables, and looking every inch like another Clytemnestra leaving Ægysthus for the pleasurable sensation involved in murdering her husband Agamemnon and the partner of his marital infidelity, the fascinating Cassandra.

A rapid drive brought her to her destination—the palace of the Kincardines, where, as every one knew, Pitsligo Tysford, the phenomenal plutocrat, was making his home and living in more than Sybaritical luxurious effeminacy. She drew over her head and face a black, impenetrable veil; and having satisfied herself that recognition was impossible, she rang the bell in a way that shocked the nerves of the placid and leisurely footman. When the porter saw her stately figure, sombrely gowned, her features carefully concealed, and heard her imperious demand that his master should be told that a lady insisted on seeing him immediately and would not give her name, his cold flunkey impertinence failed him and he hastened to obey.

The message was delivered at a supreme moment in the interview which had followed the arrival of Orlop Youtsay. With the utmost kindness and courtesy the honest seaman had been welcomed; but he was ill at ease and disturbed, like a navigator who has lost his bearings. Pitsligo saw that something was on his mind

Digitized by Google

which he hesitated to communicate before a stranger. He, therefore, thought to relieve him by introducing his distinguished guest: "Do not be afraid to speak out before his Grace. I am willing that the Duke of Kincardine should hear whatever you have to say. Your Grace, this is a shipmate of mine, Boatswain Orlop Youtsay."

The old sailor opened his eyes wide and gazed with incredulous wonder, his tongue rolled uneasily around his luscious quid of tobacco, and an involuntary whistle died away in sheer amazement. To his greater amazement the young nobleman stepped forward and extended his hand frankly, and, after some difficulty, was able to lay hold of the hard fist which the tar in his humility was withholding.

For a second the Red Comyn was inclined to attribute this awkwardness to a different cause, and then he remembered that his person and name were alike strange to Orlop and that he could not be in any way associating him with the disappearance of his daughter. In this conjecture the Duke was certainly correct. It was not the suspicion that he stood in the presence of the villain who, as he believed, had brought disgrace to his home, that was responsible for the sailor's singular conduct; but the fact that he, Orlop Youtsay, a poor, ignorant man who had followed the sea for a living, should be permitted to see a real, live Duke, who insisted on shaking hands with him. That was enough to disconcert and upset any English mariner. Orlop had once seen an admiral, and the mere sight of him in his gilded, splendid uniform had taken his breath away.

But the admiral had not noticed such a chap as himself. Instead of bestowing a glance on the fellows before the mast, he walked and talked as though there could be no higher personage in this world or the next than a British naval officer. And, yet, a Duke had spoken to him, had crossed the room to shake hands with him—an old tar—a salt, whom mates had abused and skippers had beaten! Phew! it was indeed enough to start the seams of a ship and tear the sails loose from the gaskets. What would

Digitized by Google

the wife say? and as for this hand touched by the hand of a Duke, what should he do with it? Could it be done without seriously inconveniencing him, he would be pleased to wrap it up carefully, enclose it in a glass case and place it on exhibition in some noble and immortal institution like the British Museum or Madam Taussaud's on Baker Street.

Orlop was brought to himself and down from the seventh heavens of astonishment by Pitsligo's quaintly saying: "There now, boatswain, luff, and don't steer so far from the wind. Sit down, and tell me what brought you here." But this was more than he could be persuaded to do. What! he sit in the presence of a Duke! Why, some one would be expecting him to take a chair in the company of an archangel next. No; he had been better brought up than to presume in that way. He knew his place, he did. So with a nautical lurch of the head, and a touch of the bald forehead where a lock once had grown, he leaned on a convenient table, and in his fumbling, bashful diffidence picked up a bejewelled bauble of a tiny weapon and nervously played with it as he stammeringly attempted to speak.

He told in a roundabout way, and with just a touch of the seaman's lingo, how he had come across the clergyman in the snow and how he had taken him home and cared for him. He described his striking appearance very graphically, and he related at length how unwilling the preacher had been to disclose his identity. Continuing, he added: "What to do next I don't know. He won't show his colours, nor answer signals. One can see that he belongs to the sky fleet; but he has painted out the name of the craft. He's been with us three days and we have done the best we could for him—the old woman and your humble servant. But the parson hardly speaks to us. He sits at the window and stares at the snow on Hackney Common—just as the lookout in the crow's nest sharply watches the fog rolling over the sea. Well, sir, I feels as a skipper does when he has done all that good seamanship can do to save his vessel, and yet

Digitized by Google

I don't want to abandon her and take to the boats. So I comes to you, sir, to see if you can help me to get him out of the trough of the sea and make him once more answer the tiller in his own hands. I expects, sir, and you'll excuse me, your Highness," ducking his head anew to the Duke, "that there's a woman somehow mixed up with the parson's troubles; for twice in his sleep and more than twice when awake and talking to himself I've overheard him calling on Sibilla Macgillivray—and you know, sir, that's an old-fashioned name, and what's rum about it all is that my wife's name was Macgillivray, Zinnia Macgillivray and her mother was called Sibilla. Queer, isn't it, your Highness?"

The sailor came to a dead halt in his narrative, transfixed and tongue-tied as he observed the pallor that had overspread the face of Pitsligo, and the expression of his eyes. The Australian trembled visibly in his chair; and his hands had half lifted him from his seat, while his thin lips opened and shut as though he knew not whether to speak or be silent. The Duke, likewise, perceived his inexplicable agitation and sprang to his side, apprehensive that the old man had been stricken by apoplexy, exclaiming: "What is the matter? Are you ill? What can I do for you? Shall I send for my physician? Speak, speak!"

Orlop feared that his venerated friend was dying, and holding on to the glittering skean dhu he had been fumbling while he spoke, made for the bell handle that he might arouse the house. Before he could accomplish his design, the spasm, whatever its nature or cause, had passed, and Pitsligo, sinking back into his chair, entreated his anxious visitors not to alarm themselves or others. It was just at this interesting crisis, when Pitsligo was regaining mastery over himself, when Kincardine was sympathetically soothing him, and when Orlop was hesitating whether or not it was best to give the bell a vigorous ring, that the servant entered with the message from Thalia Thesperius.

"Tell the lady," sharply answered the Duke, speaking

Digitized by Google

for his host, "that Mr. Tysford does not wish to be interrupted and must be excused. There, Calmay, you are equal to this sort of thing, make any explanation you please, only get rid of her."

"Yes, your Grace, I'll do the best I can—but this lady, your Grace, I'm afraid won't take no for an answer."

"Won't she, though? Then send for an officer."

"No; my lord Duke," interposed Pitsligo, "better let the lady say her say and avoid a scene. She may be some poor creature in distress, she may be friendless, and who are we that she should be denied the privilege of unburdening her heart and seeking succour? Calmay, show her up—and I trust your Grace and Orlop will remain with me." He spoke slowly—more so even than was his custom—as though the distress he had suffered had not wholly gone—and had he revealed what was passing in the depths of his soul, he would have confessed that he had granted the woman's request more in the hope that hearing her story might afford him opportunity to think out certain contingencies and possibilities which the narrative of Orlop had suggested than for any good which he might be able to do her. "Show her up, Calmay," he repeated.

"Yes, sir, at once."

In a few moments Thalia Thesperius herself entered the apartment, with her thick veil so arranged as completely to conceal her face, and moving with that peculiar, indescribable, gliding motion, which is indigenous to the stage and which is recognized as walking nowhere else, either in heaven or on earth. All that was necessary to perfect the illusion that the gloomy and mysterious lady was about to enact a part in some blood-curdling drama, was the turning down of the footlights and the rising of the moon in the background, to the accompaniment of slow, eerie music. These effects were however impossible in the circumstances, and the actress had to proceed without their aid. She approached Pitsligo, who rose from his chair and politely motioned her to be seated.

Digitized by Google

"Excuse me, I prefer to stand"—she spoke in deep, guttural, hollow tones, as Lady Macbeth is represented by an occasional actress as having spoken when she remonstrated with her timid husband on his unreasonable qualms of conscience.

"To what necessity do I owe the honour of this visit, madam?" inquired Pitsligo.

Thalia, through her veil could see that others were in the room, and instead of answering Pitsligo's question she asked:

"Am I to proceed in the presence of these persons?"

"Yes; unless you seriously object."

"It is a matter of indifference to me. I have come to warn you against the machinations of a monster, a creature so vile and dastardly that he deserves the contempt of every honest man."

"Thanks, madam; but I cannot imagine what I have done to deserve this consideration at your hands."

"You? Nothing. I have no thought of you in what I am doing: I am seeking revenge!"

The "r" rolled, and the word "revenge" was lingeringly pronounced, as though it were too sweet a morsel to let slip hurriedly into common ears, and Thalia assumed an appropriate pose, or a pose that she fancied was appropriate.

"But what can I do?" queried Pitsligo, readily reverting to a form of interrogation with which habit had familiarized him in his wilderness monologues.

"Do? That you must decide for yourself. But if, after you have heard, you do not denounce him, hand him over to justice and execrate him, then probably what I have been told about yourself is entitled to credence." And at this point, she moved back and shuddered.

"What do you mean, madam, by this gratuitous insinuation?"

"That," she replied sharply, "is not my affair, and I ought not to have alluded to what concerns other people. My business is simply to expose a trickster, a rep-

Digitized by Google

robate, who has wronged me and whom you are befriending and enriching."

"But I have a right to know by whom and in what way I am defamed."

"You will know that in due time, I suppose; but not from me."

"Then, madam, this interview must end."

Pitsligo spoke softly but firmly. Thalia in a tragical, disdainful manner, after taking a few steps towards the door and artistically sweeping the carpet with her long black train, answered:

"This is just as I expected. I have heard, sir, of your scandalous youth and of the blood that stains your accursed money. Why should I have supposed that such a creature as you are would disown a companion who betrays innocent women, who cheats unsuspecting youths in gaming resorts and who has neither reputation nor credit even at such a place as Charmartan's near Leicester Square? What difference can it make to you that he has two wives living, myself whom he has twice duped, and another, the coarse creature, whose daughter, and his daughter—for he does not deny his paternity—you are spoiling and corrupting with your wealth?"

"Madam, you are going beyond the limits of common decency," responded Pitsligo, now moved and indignant though preserving his external calm. "I do not wish to be rude. But you are a stranger. This is an intrusion. You have no right to insult me and I request you to retire."

"You thrust me out of your house, do you? And you make common cause with this bigamist, this gambler, this robber! You defend him, do you? Well—I am going. It will not be necessary for these ruffians," looking towards the utterly dumfounded Kincardine and Youtsay, "to bind me, gag and cast me out." She looked as though she rather coveted such ignominious treatment. "That despicable old pirate I have seen before and fear him not, and as for the other"—him she had never met—"he seems cold and cruel, but I defy

Digitized by Google

him. I go, sir, conscious of my womanly integrity, glad to escape further pollution from the poison atmosphere of this palatial pesthouse; I go, sir, to nurse my wrongs, and to pray that vengeance may now overtake you as well as that depraved wretch, whom you insist on upholding in his nefarious and devilish practices—the Master of Rowallan." With an emphatic and threatening twirl of her train, Thalia Thesperius departed as she had entered, and needed only slow music with a discordant crash, and the rising moon, to complete in her own mind the artistic satisfaction she felt on the magnificent impression she had made.

An impression she had made, profound and painful, and could she have anticipated the results of the part she had played she would have been more than elated. The Duke was incensed. He was troubled over the charges that had so unequivocally been laid at the door of Rowallan, following so soon after the warnings uttered by Pitsligo, and he was indignant at the assault on the fair name of Pitsligo himself. Orlop was in a towering rage, also, and found it difficult to restrain a rising stream of imprecation. He was angry to the point of profane objurgation that any one should have dared maliciously to slander his benefactor; and, for some reason known only to himself, he was perturbed, excited and nervous over the mention of Rowallan's name, a name he had heard but rarely, and then only from the lips of his wife, for many years. The Rowallan referred to by the violent, vindictive woman probably was not the man whose name stirred him so strangely. But all the same, his face darkened, his lips moved as though shaping a particularly fine assortment of expressive oaths, his hand clutched the haft of the tiny weapon he had been involuntarily twisting and twirling, and he drew it from its sheath. It was then that his fury and rage were suddenly transformed into a feeling of stupefied amazement. He stood transfixed, gazing at the naked blade in his hand, and for the moment, unable to speak. Pitsligo Tysford on his part had sunk back into his chair, fatigued and depressed.

Digitized by Google

The Duke was the first to recover his equanimity. "I would not," he said, addressing himself to Pitsligo, "allow this virago, this Jezebel, to unnerve me. Treat her as you would an anonymous letter—as unworthy of serious concern."

Pitsligo nodded slowly; but it was not quite evident that he comprehended, as he seemed to be absorbed in thoughts unshared by his companions and which he was not inclined to divulge. And now Orlop advanced towards him and holding the unsheathed skean dhu in such a way that it could be seen clearly, asked in a voice choking with emotion:

"Your honour, may I be so bold—will you tell me how this old rusty bit of steel found its way here? It is mine."

"Surely not," responded Pitsligo, rousing himself from his self-engrossment. "Foyle Shane said he found it in the street, and I bought it of him. It is mine, not because I purchased it, however, but because, strange to say, I lost it nearly fifty years ago."

"My service and respects to your honour, but you couldn't have lost it then, for about that time it was stuck into my neck just above the shoulder by a bloody ruffian who escaped and left it in the wound. I was only a lad then, and I don't remember much about it. But mother told me that the man who did it had killed a fellow in Tiger Bay, and that a Jew had seen him do it."

Pitsligo was ghastly white, his features were wan and pinched, and he seemed perceptibly to have aged while the sailor spoke. He replied though with more than his usual deliberation: "Your mother was mistaken; the Jew deceived her. I struck the blow not knowing at whom it was aimed. A mob had set upon me, and I defended myself. Some one seized my arm, or tried to do so, and I drove the weapon backward on my assailant. That's all there's to it. I am sorry I hurt you. But I trust you bear no malice."

The sailor listened with deference. Nevertheless, his manner changed. He twirled his cap restlessly in his

Digitized by Google

fingers, a stubborn hard look came into his face and he hung his head in a threatening manner. Every trace of interest in the original object of his visit had disappeared, and apparently he had forgotten the parson and the Sibilla Macgillivray of the parson's dreams and waking hours. He moved sullenly up to the chair of Pitsligo, and handed him the skean dhu, then turned towards the door, and before he went out, said: "There's your own, sir. I don't want it. How it got out of my house I don't know, unless Fiona took it, and lost it, poor child, when she lost herself in the street." His face turned livid with rage and he closed his big fists hard and tight. "And if ever I fall foul of the black pirate who has scuttled her peace and happiness I'll sink him without mercy into the depths of perdition. There, now, that's none of your affair. But hear me, sir. I'm poor, I've seen trouble and the fury of the gale's on me still. But neither me nor Zinnia is so poor as to take blood money. And do you grip what I mean when I'm saying, that me and Zinnia will work our fingers bare and will sell the house over our head rather than keep a penny of the blasted money you have lent us, which is as filthy as the dirty pay of the crimp who shanghais a widow's son."

Forth he went, and Pitsligo astounded, pale, piteously called on him to remain. But, no. Onward the sailor rolled carrying consternation to the refined and elegant servants by the loud, coarse oaths which he sent echoing through the gilded halls. Free of the restraint against which he had chafed, he now abandoned himself to the luxury of one of his awful spasms of profanity. He swore, swore, swore and swore again, down the stairs, in the ear of the outraged porter, on the street beyond, and ceased not until he had staggered into the nearest public house where, as he could not very well do two things at one time, he drowned his blasphemous speech in copious draughts of burning brandy.

The Red Comyn did not know what to think of the scene he had just witnessed. Pitsligo sat cowering, and as one cowed. He seemed crushed by an unexpected

Digitized by Google

resurrection of fearful crimes. The Duke was conscious that his own warmth of regard and gratitude had been chilled; and while he was too well-bred to act or speak rudely, he could not carry himself as unreservedly as he had at the first. He addressed a few polite commonplaces to the sufferer by his side, but there was a tone of insincerity running through his words which was distasteful to himself, and which was not lost on Pitsligo.

The old man, with mournful dignity, replied: "Your Grace, I thank you for the consideration shown me in your language though I perceive your heart is far from your lips. I do not blame you for your misgivings; but remember that when the proper time comes Miss Angelica will make plain what I am not now free to divulge, and then you will yourself acknowledge how utterly groundless are all these fearful accusations."

The Duke's face brightened, and he exclaimed: "Forgive me, Mr. Tysford, for the doubt that came unbidden to my mind; but ——"

"Say no more, your Grace. You have nothing with which to reproach yourself, and I have nothing to forgive. But may I ask of you a favour? Nay; do not start, there is involved in what I venture to propose no possibility of stain to your ducal honour. You recall what Orlop said about a clergyman who repeats the name of one Sibilla Macgillivray?"

"Certainly, and I recall also that the name affected you deeply, or at least, when it was mentioned you were visibly overcome. I could not understand; for the name is not an uncommon one in Scotland. My father used to speak of Macgillivrays who were highly esteemed in our family, and there was a Miss Macgillivray who married the Master of Rowallan—and it was principally on her account that I consented to aid Rowallan by assuming the position of chairman in the Emancipator Company."

"May I ask," inquired Pitsligo, "whether he deigned to inform you what had become of his wife?"

"Really, I did not ask particularly. He said some-

Digitized by Google

thing, I believe, about her being in Paris at that time, and for all I know she may be in London now. You see I have been absent a good deal from the city, and, then, while I felt bound to help Rowallan, he does not belong to my set and I have not felt called on to visit his house."

"I see; excuse me for my ignorance of social conventionalities, your Grace. But may I not hope that these conventionalities will not restrain a nobleman of your rank from condescending to serve the cause of truth and justice."

"Anything under heaven that I can do for right and righteousness I am ready to do, into whatever company, however lowly, its exactions may bring me."

"I expected from the nobility of your nature such an avowal," Pitsligo replied. "Your Grace, the service I humbly solicit of you, and which I would have undertaken myself, but for the violent conduct of Youtsay, is that you should seek the sailor's home near Hackney Common, acquaint yourself with the unhappy clergyman, learn from him where this Sibilla Macgillivray dwells, and at any cost bring her to me or find a way to take me to her, and if possible induce Mrs. Youtsay herself to favour me with an immediate interview."

The young man expressed his willingness to undertake this task, though he confessed his inability to see what important results could be expected from its successful performance. Nor was Pitsligo disposed to enlighten him. But the Duke was the more inclined to enter on the mission as he had thought from Youtsay's description that the demented cleric might be his old friend Blair Hamley, whom he had insulted so grossly and who had retaliated so nobly and generously. Of this impression, however, he said nothing, and with a few words of apology for what had passed, he took his leave.

"And what shall I do next?" inquired Pitsligo of himself, as dreamily he closed his eyes that by shutting out the external world he might the better see the processioning fancies which crowded after each other and thronged

Digitized by Google

the world within. None of the images and none of the movements, even then, were altogether clear to him. He saw and yet he was not quite sure he saw.

The old sailor crossed his field of vision, and then the wife, whom he called Zinnia, followed, and by her side a maiden, whose face was hidden. Two names, Fiona and Sibilla, were fondly whispered by soundless voices from unseen lips; and then the inner world was filled with shrieks and wild reproaches; and crashing, with thunderous reverberation, houses fell, homes crumbled, and through the devastation Pitsligo saw the pallid countenance of Jabez Pinchover, the shamed and mournful face of Comyn Kincardine, and the derisive, cruel smile of Powrie Rowallan.

"And what shall I do now?"

Digitized by Google

XXV

ROWALLAN REMEMBERS THE RESOURCES OF SCIENCE

MITCHIE CARFRAE had come to be a frequent caller on Rowallan. He had bits of news to report regarding the fluctuating opinions and contradictory rumours which were jeopardizing the stability of the Emancipator Company. It had been possible for him to give the Master timely warning of a bear movement which might have entailed disastrous results.

The information imparted had proven of great value. It had averted a panic. Pitsligo Tysford had been appealed to, and his support had saved the market. The stock rallied and went above par, and when it was soaring Jabez Pinchover quietly unloaded a pretty large block, and Mitchie, having been rewarded for his sagacity by a considerable number of shares, secretly followed the governor's example. He was naturally proud of his success, and enjoyed the gambler's sweet satisfaction of obtaining something for nothing. In other important matters he had rendered himself serviceable to Rowallan, and in their intercourse, for the sake of averting comments, he had visited the house at Lancaster Gate rather than the office.

The two men acted towards each other as though their meeting at Charmartan's had never occurred, if not with entire candour, at least, with an appearance of cordiality and confidence. Rowallan, notwithstanding his antipathy for the name borne by Carfrae, was disposed to treat him amicably. He relaxed something of his reserve in talking with him, shared with him his cigarettes, invited him to dine, and even condescended so far as to introduce him

Digitized by Google

to his daughter. Tina welcomed him with a joyous "Ooh!" and would have betrayed her former acquaintance with him, had it not been for an admonitory look from her mother who had carefully trained her beforehand for such a contingency. The frightened young woman, who trembled and dared not even speak whenever mother Quaco frowned, promptly subsided, and responded with another, and now a half-smothered, dreary "Ooh!" Mitchie was equally reticent as to the past, and by his frigid politeness conveyed the impression that he was greeting a stranger.

Gradually, however, and yet with remarkable rapidity, on subsequent calls, this stiffness wore away, and the two talked together more familiarly. Tina was pleased to have him near her. He relieved the monotony of her isolation, and diverted her from her bewildered and troubled thoughts. Yet she could not overcome the strange feelings which had possessed her in Gower Street whenever he had been kind to her—feelings partly of repulsion and partly of attraction. She was drawn to him and shrank from him at the same moment, wanted to go to him and be with him, yet longed to escape from him and never see him again.

The Master of Rowallan observed Mitchie's growing attentions to Tina. He easily divined the source of this ardour, and he laughed to think how speedily it would collapse were the fraud in which the girl was unconsciously playing a part exposed to the light. But as his own mind was occupied with matters of graver concern to himself he did not care to interfere with this folly.

He was still gambling, and in the heat of the game he was anxious that his mind should not be diverted. Pitsligo had been generous. He had given Tina considerable money and had advanced various sums to Rowallan for her immediate needs. But he had not transferred to him as her guardian the million pounds which he had stated were to be her heritage.

All the necessary papers had been drawn up, and they had been seen by Rowallan, and doubtless they would

Digitized by Google

be legally sufficient to establish the girl's claim were Pitsligo suddenly to die; but certain legal formalities were yet necessary for them to be technically valid. But Pitsligo was slow in finally executing the documents. He had tried in vain to obtain from the master definite information regarding the fate of his sister; and while he could not refute Mrs. Quaco's testimony as to the identity of Tina, he felt a strong aversion to this woman who said she had watched over the child from her birth. For these reasons he faltered, not that he really suspected a fraud, but in the hope of securing better proofs of the girl's parentage and a reliable clew to Zinnia's fate.

While Rowallan, however, considered it inexpedient to take any notice of Mitchie's ambitious wooing, Laissina Quaco was not disposed to be equally complaisant. She had not been blind to his fervour, and she had not been slow to appraise his pretended affection at its true value. But whether wholly spurious, or partly real and partly false, for reasons of her own, she had made up her mind that it must cease. She, therefore, watched for a favourable opportunity, and having him one day to herself she addressed herself to the delicate task of nipping an alleged passion in the bud.

"Mitchie, you're uncommon fond of little Tina of late."

"Well, suppose I am? She is worthy any man's love and devotion."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Quaco, sarcastically, "she's now worth more to a man than she was at Mrs. Gowanlock's."

"I don't understand you."

"Oh, yes, you do. A young lady with a million in her own right is of more value than a Gower Street slavey without a penny."

"Then, old girl, you mean to say that all I'm after is Tina's tin and that I don't care a farthing for her herself."

"That's about the size of it, Mitchie Carfrae. You'll please not call me 'old girl' again. It's altogether too familiar, and you must remember that you are now talking to a respectable woman."

"Oh, bosh! Respectability be blowed!"

Digitized by Google

That was an unwise as well as an ungentlemanly retort. Mitchie was scorning the fetish of Laissina Quaco, and such sacrilege at once roused her ire. She quickly came to the defence of her idol.

"Yes, it was blowed," she angrily exclaimed, "and you know who blowed it—fly-blowed it and no mistake. But it's improving now, and I tell you, Mitchie Carfrae, that I'll ride in my own carriage yet, an' no one will dare say ought agin me. And I'm not so sure that I'll speak to you then at all, and——"

"Shut up, I tell you," the impatient Carfrae growled. "You forget that I know all about you, and that were I to repeat in the ear of Rowallan all you've told me, whatever your relations with him may be, there would be an end to this brag and bluster. And were I to talk it all over with Mr. Tysford, and were I to tell him about Charmartan's—I think he wouldn't be over-ready to let either of you see the colour of his money. So stop your humbug! I've made up my mind. I don't see your game exactly, but I'm going to be in it, and the easiest way for me to take a hand is by marrying Tina, and I'm going to make her my wife."

Carfrae's brutal speech brought Mrs. Quaco to her senses. She was still furious; but she had been made suddenly conscious of her peril, and therefore she discreetly restrained her temper, and spoke quietly and without visible passion.

"I'm not afraid of you, Mitchie Carfrae. And what I'm going to say I'm saying for your own good. You shan't, and you can't marry Tina—she's your sister."

This disclosure, which Mrs. Quaco had more than once been tempted to make, and which Mitchie's headstrong intention had now rendered imperative, shocked that not over-sensitive individual, and filled him with a feeling akin to the consternation experienced when the rumbling noise of an avalanche smites the ear of the helpless traveller.

"My sister!"

"Yes; the daughter of Captain Raeburn Carfrae."

Digitized by Google

"And you?"

"Her mother."

Immediately the narrative of her own life, as detailed by her on a recent night in her lodgings near Leicester Square, flashed on his memory, and he could see it all. He needed no explanations. It was in almost every particular clear to him now. This revelation threw light on Laissina's interest in himself and on the pains she had taken to place Tina near him at Mrs. Gowanlock's and to charge him with a kind of oversight of the girl. He could not doubt;—yet falteringly and as though he could not believe the report of his ears, he answered:

"Surely this can't be."

"And why not? Why? Here's a man who broke the heart of his wife, your mother, who left her to die in poverty, and never bestowed a thought on his son except to obtain for him admittance—and that, too, by a trick—into the Boys' Blue Coat School. When a widower in a distant land he tried to alienate a woman's affections from her husband, broke up what might have been a happy home; and seeing a silly girl, away from family and friends, spread his wiles, and—pshaw! any infamy is possible to such a blackguard."

"Hush, hush, Laissina, hush, remember he was my father!"

As Mitchie spoke his voice betrayed extreme agitation. For the first time in his life he had a sense of the shame attached to the foul and polluted ways of corrupt, conscienceless men. He had no particular horror of his own depravity, no inward compunctions leading to self-condemnation and penitence. What he saw was the unrelieved blackness of another, unillumined by a single virtue, and that other his own father. Something in him revolted, he knew not what, filled him with contempt for such a parent, and roused in him the spirit of rebellion against the monstrous fate which had transmitted to himself the appetites and the evil name of the disreputable and dastardly scamp. Never before had Laissina seen the man so shaken up. Seeking to soothe him, she said:

Digitized by Google

"There, there, Mitchie, you know I don't want to be hard on you. The Captain's dead, he is, and so let him be. Says I often to myself, says I, 'What's in the grave had better remain there.' But you, you can't blame me for trying to keep you from running into a scrape which would make you wretched all your days. A peaceful mind is worth more, Mitchie, than all the gold on earth."

The last sentence was uttered with peculiar unction, and with a gratifying smack of the lips, as indicating a certain limit in wrong-doing, which the speaker could never bring herself to transgress. She was not disposed to give the weight of her respectability to sensational scandals. It was necessary in every career to draw the line somewhere, and she, whatever may have been the character of her shortcomings, drew the line at marrying one's half-sister.

"But I don't see how you can do it?"

"Do what, Mitchie?"

"Why, rob the other girl." And Mitchie scanned Laissina's countenance closely, but no traces of compunction rewarded his scrutiny. "Yes, that's what you're doing, you and Tina between you—robbing the real heiress."

"Now, Mitchie, stop; Tina has no part in this business. I have told her she's the daughter of Powrie and she believes it; an' when she's asked questions, says I to her, says I, 'Wait, girls oughter honour their father and mother and keep quiet.' And she obeys, and she knows it wouldn't be good for her if she didn't." The hard, cruel look in her face expressed more emphatically than words what would probably befall a recalcitrant child. "As for me and Powrie, we're only doing what others would do if they had half a chance."

This logic was to Mr. Pinchover's trusty clerk unanswerable. He did not pretend to cope with it; yet he was unable to dismiss the claims of the "other girl," as he called her, in this easy and peremptory fashion. After a moment's silence he asked:

"Do you know the other girl?"

Digitized by Google

"What other girl?"

"Why, the girl who ought to have the money?"

"I see. You mean Powrie's real daughter, who, as I told you once, was carried away by her mother from Buenos Ayres when our troubles came. No, I don't know her. I haven't seen her since she was a baby."

"Suppose I were to try and find her out?"

"But, Mitchie, if you were to begin inquiries you would ruin us."

"Well, what difference would that make to me? The other girl would pay me, and might marry me, and the newspapers would write me up and no mistake as a credit to my species."

Laissina clutched at his sleeve and drew him to her and whispered fiercely in his ear:

"And you think I would not strike back! Why, man, I would strike and hard. I would tell of your fast ways, of your freedom with the firm's money, and of your willingness to marry Tina, if you could only get control of the property. Yes, I would strike without mercy and wouldn't spare. Don't play the fool; for if I strike the blow will bruise and tear worse than a tiger's. I am not to be threatened and I ain't to be trifled with."

"Well," muttered Mitchie, "I'll think it over. But if you are not to be threatened, neither am I to be bullied. I'll guard my own interests. At present I have only a vague promise of reward, no sum settled and no guarantees. I will not trust any of you. Unless a bargain is made with me I'll take the liberty of communicating to Mr. Tysford all of the interesting items of news I have had furnished me in this virtuous abode."

"Do not be rash, Mitchie, give me time to turn round, say till the day after to-morrow, Christmas day, and in the meanwhile I'll tell Powrie what has been said in this talk and get for you the pledges you want."

Encouraged by Laissina's unexpected, pliant and almost suppliant mood, Carfrae answered:

"They must be in writing for £100,000 with £10,000 down to bind the agreement."

Digitized by Google

"But Mitchie, he'll never yield so much. Your price is exorbitant; it is downright robbery."

"Umph!" retorted Carfrae, "it squints that way, but it isn't the only piece of robbery going on. That, or I go elsewhere and carry my merchandize to another market."

"I'm not hopeful of success, but I'll do what I can."

"So be it. I must be off. I've stayed altogether too long. Say to the Master of Rowallan that were I in his place I'd accept the terms offered, and accept quick. You may add that there's more going forward than he supposes in the direction of this famous Mr. Tysford. Others are interested in his property besides ourselves; the law may take a hand in administrating his wealth, and he himself may find it convenient to flit the country—and leave you all with the name of a bequest without the substance."

"Are you in earnest, Mitchie Carfrae?" inquired the breathless and astonished Mrs. Quaco.

"Very much so and never more so. I've been able to delay proceedings, but I can't postpone them much longer. They must take their course and the whole world will be horrified."

"But won't you explain?"

"No, it's my secret. It may mean lots of money to me, and I'm not going to share it with any one—particularly with the Master of Rowallan. Say to him that I advise him to get all the property coming to this daughter of his safely transferred before Christmas. If he does this the proceedings I refer to will leave untouched her possessions, and if by to-morrow evening he agrees to my offer, neither before nor after will any doubt be raised by myself as to the legality of her claim."

"To-morrow evening may not be convenient, as Mr. Tysford is to dine here at that time."

"I shan't call till late, and I'll not intrude on his guest. He need have no apprehensions on that score; and if he's successful in getting Tina's property fully made over to him as her guardian before he sees me, he may not

Digitized by Google

find it so much of a hardship as you suppose to satisfy my modest demands."

"I will do the best I can," repeated the now tractable Mrs. Quaco.

"And were I you, I would let him know my identity and my relation by blood and birth to Tina, and just add that I shall expect him to do the fair and square thing by my sister—or—no, that will keep for a future time. Good-bye."

Mrs. Quaco immediately after Mitchie's departure communicated to Rowallan the substance of their conversation, heightened here and there by over-wrought touches. Her report was not altogether as lucid or as accurate as it might have been, but as it chimed in with his own misgivings and reflected his own anxiety, Rowallan received it with less irritation than she had anticipated. Though he said little, and realized that he must yield something and be willing to compromise, he inwardly chafed at Mitchie's exactions. That he would in the long run be able to circumvent this disgraceful son of a disreputable father and have his own way in the end, he hardly doubted; but it fretted him to temporize with such as he, and to feel compelled to conciliate one whose very name was a detestation to him.

These thoughts, however, he did not divulge to the anxious and solicitous Mrs. Quaco. He had had too many confidences with her already, and she had become so tyrannical that it was wiser not to say anything that might increase her power over him. When with feverish haste and trepidation she poured into his ear the ultimatum of the despicable Carfrae, Rowallan simply replied in monosyllables or in empty and hollow phrases; and when in her increasing terror she importuned, he only went so far as to promise that he would see Carfrae, would satisfy his demands as far as he could, and would certainly prevent him from doing her or Tina any harm.

Other things besides the venomous sputum of young Carfrae's tongue and the blustering ways of this upstart housekeeper disturbed the serenity of Powrie Rowallan.

Digitized by Google

They were bad enough, but they were not all; neither were they the worst. There was Thalia Thesperius, who had addressed him in an insulting note, signing herself "Yours, with everlasting disrespect," and setting forth at length and in most furious dramatic style how she had exposed him to Pitsligo Tysford, how she had laid bare his peccadillos at Charmartan's, and how she had proclaimed him a heartless bigamist. As he closed the stilted and acrimonious epistle, he cursed her in his soul, and found himself thinking of Professor Jorge Avecomus.

"Yes, he would have rewarded her with a glass of crême de menthe. Ah, Avecomus, what a tyro you were when you initiated me into the Sublime Somatic Science, and how little you knew in comparison with those adepts at whose feet I have sat and studied in India, the hierophants of mysteries deeper and more impenetrable than those inaugurated by Eumolpus in ancient Eleusis. I could throw this anfractuous glittering elapidæ of a woman a bunch of flowers, when receiving the homage of her enchanted admirers—and then—only a sudden swoon, a few hours of panting life, heart failure, followed by eloquent obituaries and a gorgeous funeral. But this sweet death inhaled with the perfumed breath of flowers, this endless, dreamless sleep induced by the fragrant nepenthe of the fields, is not for such as she. To live is a more terrible doom. To fade, to grow old, to reach that withered stage of existence in which no rouge can obscure the yellow of the skin and no belladonna impart a spasmodic lustre to the eye, no longer to fascinate and enslave, no longer to be followed, admired, applauded, is so exquisite a punishment that she ought to be spared to taste it to the full. So be it. Jorge Avecomus, your suggestion would make me her friend, not her enemy, her benefactor, not her destroyer. She has done her worst; she can do me no farther harm. Let her live. My business it is to efface the impression, to counteract the evil, lest Tysford should reconsider his plans and demand back——"

"A letter, Sahib," exclaimed Naoroji, abruptly enter-

Digitized by Google

ing the room and disturbing the Master's reverie. Rowallan opened it with sore misgivings, for he recognized the handwriting, and the clouding of his brow gave unmistakable proof that his apprehensions were not unwarranted.

The letter read: "Sir: My mind is sore perplexed over troublous rumours. These must be explained. There are several doubts that must be cleared up before I can proceed further with you in the business relating to the young woman you call your daughter. Moreover, I desire to give notice that the money advanced you on your note as treasurer of the Emancipator Company, for the purpose of averting the panic of last week, is now due, and the note has this day been committed by me to the bank for collection. I am also compelled by my mental distress to withdraw my acceptance of your invitation to dine with you on the morrow.

"PITSLIGO TYSFORD."

Rowallan had no need of an interpreter to decipher and elucidate the "handwriting on the wall." The mischievous malice of Thalia Thesperius had evidently worked rapidly and potently. But what did Tysford mean by his ambiguous allusion to Tina? The actress was ignorant of the imposition. Of course, she may have suspected something wrong, but to Rowallan she had never intimated the least doubt of the girl's parentage. "Were there other foes plotting evil, and seeking to ensnare? Who could they be?" The Master shivered at the thought of unknown enemies scheming against him in the dark, and ready, unperceived, to smite him when off his guard. Ruin and worse than financial disaster stared him in the face. If he were unable to meet the maturing note, if the secret of Tina's birth had been divulged and the conspiracy exposed, bankruptcy in fortune and reputation would inevitably follow.

He once more recalled the form and face of Jorge Avecomus. Rowallan, in spite of himself, shuddered. He looked about him and his eye rested on the white-

Digitized by Google

robed and turbaned figure of Naoroji, who stood apart, placid and statuesque, his features immobile, his eyes half closed, absorbed in thought, and seemingly as far removed from what interested his master as the Ganges is from the Thames.

"Naoroji, why do you remain here? Have you any message to deliver, or anything you wish to say?"

The contemplative mood instantaneously disappeared, and an alert, servile and obsequious Hindu, bowing low, as though he would kiss the dust from off his master's feet, whispered softly in a way resembling the hiss of a serpent:

"Whatever the Sahib commands Naoroji will do. He has waited to say this, as he has perceived that the Sahib is in trouble."

"Do you mean, Naoroji, that you would aid me, as you have before, in punishing an enemy so that he might endure the pain of disease and be compelled to fight for his life?"

"Yes, Sahib, anything; particularly this, for it is soothing to one's feelings when one can torture a foe and see him writhe and die, and never fear detection." Here Naoroji smiled vindictively, and seeing a couple of flies struggling for freedom from a half-filled wine-glass into which they had fallen, he benignly and carefully extracted them from their peril, and was rewarded and comforted by the approval of his Hindu conscience. Powrie noticed the action, but refrained from comment. He merely remarked:

"Not necessarily to die. To suffer, of course, but not certainly to succumb. If death supervene, that is the fault of the physician, who ought to be capable of arresting the ravages of disease. If science is to be credited, we are all of us by breath and touch endangering each other's health, and in seeking to get even with one we hate, why may we not employ the very agency God Himself has created and do consciously what every day we are doing unconsciously, and leave the result with Him and with the doctors?"

Digitized by Google

"The Sahib talks like the pundit he is," replied the feline Hindu. Then, his eyes again half closed, and he added: "When will it please you that the Sahibah fall sick, and with what disease,—leprosy, smallpox, or yellow fever,—shall we smite her?"

The intensity of his subdued speech startled Rowallan, and yet knowing what he knew of the cruel superciliousness of Laissina Quaco, he was not surprised at the deadly resentment her conduct had provoked. He did not, however, permit himself to discuss the subject with Naoroji, and answered: "Not her, my faithful Naoroji, at least not now. I will not say that I never will permit you to do as you may desire, especially if you serve me loyally. But not at present. My enemy is a man, an old man, as old as I am in years but older far in strength and energy."

"I know," responded the Hindu, "but I do not understand."

"And it is not necessary that you understand. To-morrow by some means he must be brought here to dine——" and as he spoke the details of the desperate venture became clear. He would induce his sister to persuade Pitsligo to keep his engagement, and at the table the guest must fall sick and be prevented from leaving the house, doctors must be sent for, Angelica must nurse the invalid, and during the few hours that intervene between the stroke and death, he himself must see that no deeds are cancelled and no new devises signed. Thus, if all goes well, he will secure a handsome competency and can hereafter defy the frowns of fickle fortune.

"Mr. Tysford must be overcome when feasting by a serious vertigo or by a partial shock, and in his helpless state must be borne to my chamber, and medical aid be summoned. In twenty-four hours heart failure will probably end the struggle, and, like Lazarus, whom he once resembled, he will doubtless be carried by the angels to the bosom of Abraham in heaven."

"It can easily be done. The Sahib has only to select

Digitized by Google

the infinitesimal and undiscoverable agent and Naoroji will see to it that it is successfully administered."

"You will be careful, for it would never do for others of my guests to be stricken at my table and by the same disease."

"Never fear, Sahib; what is for him none other will share. Trust me."

"I do, Naoroji, and will reward you, too."

"With Sahibah Quaco?" Naoroji's eyes glittered with the fierce light seen in the eyes of a tiger when about to spring on its helpless victim. Rowallan could not but smile at the Hindu's inplacable spirit.

"Yes, by and by," he replied, "but not now, not in London. Wait! Prepare for the great triumph of science over nature on the morrow. But in making science subservient to our purposes, as others do through the use of hypnotism and magnetism, let us be careful not to lose the advantage of our superior knowledge and skill."

"What would you have me do, Sahib?"

"As soon as the old man swoons you must hasten to his aid. When you free his clothing that he may breathe more easily, you are secretly to abstract from his person whatever papers or valuables he may carry."

"Regard it as done, Sahib."

"I am anxious to obtain possession of a drawing which in a moment of unusual confidence he showed me, locating certain exhaustless gold deposits known only to himself, which he says ought not to be left for strangers to discover and appropriate. When they are ours, my devoted Naoroji, you shall be richer than any Indian rajah."

The Hindu gasped with delirious joy.

"There now, restrain yourself, be composed and calm. And, listen, in the meanwhile you must assist in some other matters. Procure me a box for Madam Thesperius's performance this evening. See that the florist has the number and sends there the choicest flowers, and see that my carriage is at the stage door of the theatre at the close of the play."

Digitized by Google

After the supple Hindu had disappeared for the purpose of discharging these commands, Rowallan continued, talking to himself: "She thought, I suppose, that I would rage and defy her, and do other disagreeable things. No, I will smile on her, applaud her, wreathe her with triumphal garlands, affect to explain, entreat her pardon, enrich her with gifts, and prevent her from increasing the mischief already done by talking to others, and if necessary really marry her. Then when this crisis is past I will take her to India and—what say you, Jorge Avecomus, shall it be leprosy, or motor ataxaia? Either would do, or there may be some other punishment that, scientifically inflicted may deepen and prolong her agonies and adequately compensate me for the mortification I have endured. What a delicious ecstasy it will be at the last when she can bear no more and when the breath is departing, to whisper in her ear that Powrie Rowallan, whom she betrayed, has avenged himself by devising her tortures! But, there, I must not waste my time in dreaming of delights. My first business is with my amiable sister, Angelica."

Digitized by Google

XXVI

ALL FOR THE LOVE OF A WOMAN

THE short winter day was drawing to a close and Orlop Youtsay had not returned to his home. Zinnia was alarmed. Since the disappearance of Fiona her husband had grown more uncertain in his ways, and had yielded increasingly to temptation. He ought to have been back two hours before dusk, and the dusk was settling into darkness with no sign of him yet.

During his absence her unhappy guest had given her no trouble, as he had kept to himself and had become encouragingly tranquil. For this she was grateful.

"Five o'clock, and no Orlop! Why will men embitter the lot of women by their recklessness and their selfish excesses!"

A polite knock at the door. Zinnia answered the summons and a tall, erect, red-headed, handsome young man stood before her and requested the privilege of seeing the clergyman whom she was hospitably entertaining. She did not hesitate to admit him. The courtesy of his bearing and his manly appearance favourably impressed her; moreover, she was glad to have some one come who might be able to end the mystery which enveloped the sufferer to whom she had afforded a refuge. It was only a fancy, and a very foolish fancy at that, yet she did fancy that this stranger resembled in form one whom she had seen in the twilight looking from across the street towards Fiona's window the very evening before the day of her flight. She put this illusion promptly from her, and received the visitor with the serenity and self-possession which are uncommon in persons of her social standing. This the Red Comyn

Digitized by Google

was not slow to recognize, and her refinement and good breeding were the more agreeable to him as they were so unexpected.

"May I not take to him your card?" she inquired.

Recalling the stormy character of their last interview, he did not deem it advisable to be personally announced. He therefore replied:

"I would much prefer introducing myself; for to be perfectly frank with you, Madame, I do not know that the gentleman beneath your roof is the one I seek. I met your husband at Mr. Tysford's ——"

"My husband!" she responded quickly. "Where is he?"

"Has he not returned?"

"No, and I am worried about him, as often since our family affliction ——" she stammered and left the sentence unfinished.

Considerately taking no notice of Zinnia's confusion, the Duke answered: "I do not think there is any cause for anxiety. When I saw Mr. Youtsay he was well. If I may say so, he was in vehement health and was abundantly able to care for himself. He will be home by and by, never fear.

"Well, to return to your invalid guest; it was from your husband I learned of your kindness, and from the description he gave of the clergyman I inferred that I knew him, and with your permission I would like to verify my belief. But you have a right to know who I am. Unfortunately, I have no one here to vouch for me, and I hoped Mr. Youtsay would arrive before me so as to give me a good name. As he is away, I must introduce myself. I am called Comyn, the Duke of Kincardine, a Scotch peer, and perhaps, as you may have heard before, nobles from North Britain are generally poor and not entitled to very much attention. I confess, were I an English lord I should be composed of such superexcellent stuff as to constitute a distinct species, separate and separable from the general run of mortals, and should deserve all the homage which man-

Digitized by Google

kind could render. But I do not belong to this exalted and exceptional breed of men. I am only a Scotch Duke—and that hardly counts—is only a step removed from nobody at all."

Zinnia was immensely interested in this little speech, with its banter and self-depreciation, but she did not believe him. She knew better. A Duke, she was aware, was a very important personage, even though a Scotch one, in England and everywhere else, and she perceived that he was only trying to make her feel at ease in his company. This pleased her; but in two other respects the speech had gratified her. It had compelled her to acquit him of any connection with the disappearance of Fiona, for a Duke would never condescend to love or say he loved a sailor's daughter; and it had brought back to her memory the days of her own childhood.

His name was familiar to her. He did not recognize her, but she knew him. Twenty years and more had passed since he as a boy had sat by her side in old Eskburgh and had put his arms round her neck as he bade her good-night. She herself then was a young woman —perhaps not so very young—but young enough still to have her hopes and her dreams. How great the change! After so long a time they met as strangers. She knew him only from his self-introduction, and he not in the remotest degree surmised her identity; she was prompted by memory and affection once more to hold him in her embrace, while he probably had forgotten her and those early days—and in a situation so lowly, with a history so miserable, her pride would not permit her to disclose herself.

With the old Scotch veneration for rank she made a graceful courtesy and said: "Your Lordship will find the minister in the front room, one flight up. Shall I precede you and light the gas?"

"No, thank you, the reflection from the street lamp on the opposite side of the way doubtless will suffice."

The Red Comyn went up-stairs and entered the cham-

Digitized by Google

ber. One glance at the desolate figure before him removed every doubt. It was, indeed, Blair Hamley, but how unlike his former self. His hair was uncombed, his beard unshaven, his collar soiled, limp and crumpled, his clothes creased and mud-stained, while his shoes, sodden and run down at the heels, had been kicked off and lay neglected on the other side of the apartment. He sat with his back to the window, and the gaslight streaming through lit up the page of a worn Bible, whose sacred words he was reading:

"My soul is full of troubles;
And my life draweth nigh unto hell;
I am counted with them that go down into the pit;
I am as a man that hath no help;
Cast off among the dead—
Like the slain that lie in the grave
Whom Thou rememberest no more
And they are cut off from Thy hand.
Thy wrath lieth hard upon me
And Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves;
Thou hast put mine acquaintance far from me——"

His plaintive voice ceased. The gas flickered, and the place on the printed page was lost. Silence prevailed for a few moments, and as the Duke drew nearer he saw that tears were falling on the sacred volume. He could resist no longer.

"Not so, not so, Blair Hamley, your acquaintance is not far from you, but is near to comfort you, near to entreat your forgiveness for the great wrong he has done you!"

Apparently without hearing, the preacher read once more:

"Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me,
And mine acquaintance into the darkness."

"No, no, your friend is by your side in this fiery furnace, ready to save your life as you once saved his."

The Anglican priest, roused by the speaker's voice, lifted up his glorious head and opened wide his blazing

Digitized by Google

eyes, and the light that shone through the window behind him lit up the face of the intruder.

"Do you not recognize me?"

His countenance betrayed pain, not anger, as the priest answered: "Yes, your Grace, I know you, know you only too well. Have you come again to slander an innocent and helpless man?"

"Oh, I beseech you not to crush me with your reproaches, deserved though they are. I am here, Blair Hamley, conscious of my guilt, to pray you to forgive the wrong I have done you in thought and word."

"It is God only who forgiveth sin!"

"True, true, and yet are we not commanded daily to pray—'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us'?"

"I am a worm and no man!" responded Hamley dejectedly, quoting from the Scriptures.

"You wrong yourself, you, who like your Master, 'when reviled, reviled not again.' I am the worm, base and vile. But you, after I had uttered what my insane jealousy prompted me to say, demonstrated your manhood—your Christ-manhood—by rescuing me from death, and by so dealing with me that further to doubt your innocence and the absolute purity of your character would be to question the reality of purity in the holiest of God's transfigured saints."

"Hush, my Lord, you go too far; but never was I guilty of what your imagination pictured—and," with indescribable pathos in his voice, "neither was she. A delusion! But the delusions of some men blight the reputations of others."

"I know it, I know it," responded the conscience-stricken Duke, "and it is that which makes this hour like an Akeldama to me. But pardon and teach me in what way I can atone and expiate my fault."

"Your Grace, justice is the highest expiation, and there can be no atonement, divine or human, where justice is set aside. One man pillages his neighbours and increases in wealth. He has trampled justice beneath his

Digitized by Google

feet. But he will atone! How? He will build an orphanage or endow a school. God Almighty will none of his atonement. The only expiation acceptable to Him is the vindication of the justice that has been disregarded and defamed. A true atonement consists in restoring what the guilty has taken away, in rendering to justice what belongs to justice. How, your Grace, can you bring back that of which you have deprived me—the respect and confidence of the poor and wayward, and my unblemished name, without which no minister of Christ can hope to bless mankind, and without which he has no right to minister in sacred things."

"But Blair Hamley, God helping me, I mean to atone by doing justly. If it brings on me the mockery of the great, if it exposes me to misapprehension and ridicule, I will do as I would be done by. From the doss-house to Lambeth palace, and from the East end to the West I will accuse myself of the wrong I have done, and hold myself up to the scorn of every right-thinking man. I will by justice expiate my injustice."

"And yet, your Grace, bear with me," the clergyman continued mournfully and humbly, "for while I am innocent of the wrong with which you charged me, my conscience tells me I am not without fault. Listen!

"After leaving Oxford, influenced by the great lives I had studied there, Keble's, Pusey's, Newman's, I consecrated myself to Christ and to His Church, and becoming a priest I vowed myself to celibacy, convinced that in that holy estate I could do more for the glory of God and the conversion of England than in the less holy estate of matrimony. The surrender of home and family appealed to my imagination as having in it an exceptional moral grandeur, and I thought, in such an age as this when so many ministers yield to social indulgences, and are not regarded by the community as a specially self-denying class, by adopting the vocation of my Lord—and you will remember that, while He was Son, He was never husband or father—I might succeed by my example in restoring the confidence of mankind in the possible

Digitized by Google

supremacy of the soul over the body, in the mastery of spirit over flesh. But, alas, I overrated my own strength, I was ignorant of my limitations. One day in a sacred place, when the enthusiasm of celibacy was at its height, she—need I name her—appeared. I saw, I loved, I fell; visions of home passed before me; a delirium of domestic peace and happiness intoxicated me—and I became an apostate priest whom God could but chastise, and He has scourged me sorely. You see, your Lordship, I am not without blame, and while I have no pardon to seek from you, I need the forbearance and compassion of my God."

"But does she know?"

"I am not as base as that. How think you could I offer her a heart that had failed to be true to itself? I have shame enough to endure on account of my yearnings for a fireside of my own and the possession of a human love, without the additional shame of exposing my weakness to the only being whose affection I crave."

"And yet, my friend, though for my peace it is better that you should feel as you do, is not your yearning natural, and is not this self-condemnation morbid?"

"But in the priest of God," replied Hamley, "the natural should be swallowed up in the supernatural."

"Pardon me," resumed the Duke, "if I differ from you. May I say without offence, that I fear in striving to be angelic we often make sad havoc of what is nobly human, and in stretching towards an imaginary height of perfection we may fail in that actual and common sense perfection which is indispensable to usefulness in the world. I will not, however, discuss with you. One thing is clear, notwithstanding your visions, both by canon and sacred law you are blameless—and in due time the whole of London will say so. But now you must stir yourself. It will be better for you to be engaged in some righteous service."

"But in what way can a broken man be of service to any one?"

"First of all," rejoined the Duke," by ceasing to think

Digitized by Google

of yourself as a broken man, for that you are not. You may be a reed shaken by the wind—but the bruised reed He will not break. And to begin, you can help me by revealing, if you know, the whereabouts of her to whom I have given my heart, and in whose home you have found a refuge in distress."

"What! this the home, and these worthy people the parents of Sibilla Macgillivray!"

The exclamation of the priest was so uttered as to betoken a renewal of interest in the well-being of others, and it explained to the Duke, in view of the confession he had heard, who this Sibilla was whose name the priest had repeated in his sleep, and why he had spoken it more than once. This was his Fiona then, who for some reason, and doubtless a good one—what lover would think otherwise?—was veiling her identity for a season; but why she chose this name in preference to another he could not divine.

"My dear Hamley, would you not be overjoyed if you could in some measure repay those who for Christ's sake took you in and cared for you when you were forlorn and destitute?"

"Indeed, I would, and there is hardly any sacrifice I would refuse to make for them and theirs."

"I thought as much," replied the Duke. "Well, would we not make them supremely happy if we were able to restore their daughter to them? What I propose is that you and I join hands and search for her until we find her, and that neither of us intimate until success shall crown our efforts that we are acquainted with her."

"Command me to the utmost," answered Blair Hamley, his worn face shining with one of his old-time smiles, "but the task cannot be a hard one. I left the young lady in the care of your nurse, Santa Zita, and she is either with her or with Miss Angelica Rowallan, to whose kind offices I commended her."

"But she is with neither," replied the Duke. "Santa Zita told me so herself. As soon as I could be safely

Digitized by Google

left, the maiden, without a word of explanation, departed from Ivernia Cottage, and the nurse intimated that she contemplated entering a convent—and for the present was absolutely safe."

"What convent?"

"She would not give the name."

"Was it St. Agatha's Priory at the East End?" Hamley inquired, his interest deepening visibly, and receiving from the Duke a shake of the head in response to his question, he continued:

"Yes, I begin to understand. Sister Zita, who herself belongs to the noble Sisterhood of Mercy, which in these last times has done so much to restore the pristine glory of our Holy Catholic Church, if she opened the door of any convent to a weary heart, it would be the door of St. Agatha. And she, hearing Sibilla's story and probably the secret reason that impelled her from her home, realizing with a woman's intuition that only the sacred life of a nun in an enclosed convent would satisfy her peculiar needs, has introduced her to the Mother Superior of St. Agatha."

"God forbid!"

"Your Grace!"

"Oh, I am not irreverent. I would not shock you. But I'm a Presbyterian, and believe that a woman's life is never more devoted to God than it is when it is given to man—as his wife, his mother. I belong to the class of men who believe that God is more highly pleased with our right use and wise enjoyment of the world than He is with our ascetic repudiation of what He in the beginning pronounced good, and very good."

"But remember, since then sin has entered in."

"True, but its entrance has not made natural relations and innocent joys sinful. I speak as a layman, and I have a right to complain that various Churches confuse the moral judgment of mankind by their denunciation of things not necessarily evil in themselves, and by their devotion to other things, either devoid of ethical qualities altogether, or subversive of the very foundations on which

Digitized by Google

real ethical conduct rests. But, there, let us not debate this issue. After you are Bishop of London you can visit me in Scotland and we can then discuss it to the bitter end." The Duke laughed as he concluded, and even the priest smiled as he answered:

"So be it. Let us set out and find Santa Zita. She will not refuse to tell me where Miss Sibilla is, and if she has entered the Priory of St. Agatha, I think I can obtain access to her, as for a few weeks I have been confessor there, and though I know very little of the sacred retreat, and though my recent troubles may debar me, the obstacle may not be insurmountable. Leave me for a while that I may make some simple preparations and I will accompany you."

This decision fell in with the Duke's secret wishes. He desired to keep the clergyman with him in his search for Fiona, and for a brief season he was anxious to converse alone with her mother that he might, if possible, ascertain why the name of Macgillivray should have been adopted in preference to any other. Zinnia received him as he returned in the most deferential manner and inquired:

"Did your Lordship find our guest to be the clerical friend you were seeking?"

"Yes, the same, and my visit has partially restored him to himself. After he recovers from the exhaustion entailed on him by our interview, he will go with me. On his behalf and my own I desire to thank you and your husband for your Christian hospitality. You have sheltered one of God's elect, and in proof of our gratitude we would place in your hands this purse, not as a reward, but that expenses you may have incurred may be covered."

"Your Grace, I do not think you would insult us; but need I remind you that Scotch hospitality is not a marketable commodity?"

"You are right, Mrs. Youtsay, and I appreciate the lesson. It will not be forgotten. And I rejoice that there are still a few things too sacred for barter. Excuse

Digitized by Google

me, may I take a chair while I wait the convenience of my friend?"

He had been standing. Zinnia hastened to push a chair towards him and carefully dusted it with her apron, but she herself remained standing. The Red Comyn observed her respectful attitude and remarked:

"A Kincardine does not sit when a lady in the room is standing."

A flush of pleasure spread over the face of Zinnia as she replied: "I am no lady, sir, only a seaman's wife."

"A sailor's wife may be just as much of a lady as the wife of a Duke. But to end these refinements, you are a woman and my hostess. If you stand, I stand. That's the Scotch of it."

Without further protest Zinnia took a chair and leaned her arm on the table, sitting thus in silence for several seconds. The Duke, on the opposite side, paused, hardly knowing how to introduce the subject uppermost in his mind. At last he ventured to speak:

"My friend up-stairs seems to have become much interested in a young lady, one Sibilla Macgillivray."

"Yes, I have heard him repeat the name."

"Do you know, or can you guess who she is?"

"No, your Grace. I am not even acquainted with the clergyman, and it would be impossible for me to be acquainted with his friends."

Anxious to draw Zinnia out that he might discover Fiona's motives for adopting that particular name, and not in the least suspecting her mother's identity, the Duke abruptly blurted out the question: "Are there any Macgillivrays in London that you know of?"

It had never been easy for Zinnia to meet a direct question with an indirect answer. How could she prevaricate now when she was addressed by one to whom she was drawn by affectionate memories, and from whose forbears her family had received nothing but kindness? To her simple way of thinking it would be the same as sacrilege to suppose a Kincardine capable of betraying a confidence.

Digitized by Google

"Yes; and my maiden name was Macgillivray."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the Duke, now keenly alive to the significance of her words. "And to what branch of the family do you belong?"

"To the Edinburgh stock."

"Can it be? Ah! the Edinburgh Macgillivrays were aye faithful to the Kincardines."

"Thanks to your Grace for the tribute. And the Kincardines have aye been kind to the Macgillivrays."

"My dear Mrs. Youtsay," responded the Duke, "why not trust me? You know I am head of the old house. Confide in me. How were you related to the Edinburgh branch? Who was your father?"

"My poor father was Deacon Brodie Macgillivray; my mother was called Sibilla; and I was christened Zinnia."

"You, you, you!" chokingly cried the Duke, starting from his chair as though a small mine had been exploded under him. "You, you—who would have thought it—why, you were my boyhood's friend, my 'wee mither,' as I called you. What, have we met again after so many years of separation?" Seized by an uncontrollable impulse he swept down on her as she sat on the opposite side of the table, and upset all of her staid, serene dignity by fervently lifting her hand to his lips and kissing it over and over again, while she, with tears of delight in her eyes, for once forgot her reserve, drew his head down with her unimprisoned hand and imprinted a kiss on his forehead. As she did so, in a crooning voice she said: "Eh, an' is it my laddie, my ain braw bairnie, an' ye've no forgotten yer auld mither!"

"Auld, ye are na auld; ye're young and bonnie too. I'm maist aside mysel; an' may I ca' ye mither?"

To the Duke this was a moment of ecstasy. He understood now why Fiona had taken her grandmother's name in preference to another, and he was convinced if he could only bring her back to the world again her mother would not be stubbornly averse to his becoming her son indeed. His ecstatic mood, however, suffered an

Digitized by Google

unpleasant chill as memory recalled an event which had indelibly imprinted itself upon his boyhood's mind, and letting go her hand he inquired:

"But how is this? You bear the name of Youtsay, and your first husband, the Master of Rowallan, is here in London. How comes it that two men can call you wife?"

Zinnia shook with fear, buried her face in her hands, and moaned pitiably. Her gladness had perished in a moment, and a sense of unutterable misery crushed her. All that she could say in the bitterness of her heart was: "Living, living, he alive—the monster, the criminal?"

"Criminal! I do not comprehend. I tell you he is alive, prosperous—the ruling spirit of a great financial corporation of which I am nominally the head, and it was because he reminded me of his relationship to yourself that I consented to lend the influence of my name to his enterprise."

"And what did he say of me?"

"He said you were absent in Paris, I believe, superintending the education of his daughter."

"Then he acknowledged Fiona as his child?"

"Yes, though he never called her by her name. She is not then the daughter of Youtsay, and she is in reality Miss Fiona Rowallan? But can you not see I am intent on knowing more of your story, and will you not, Zinnia, be candid and confide in me?"

It required an effort, it always does, to relate the events of a harrowing and sorrowful past, and Zinnia, agitated by what she had just heard, was hardly equal to the task. In much weakness and with many tears she narrated her dark history from the time she left Scotland a bride to the hour when she forsook her husband at Buenos Ayres. When for a moment she halted overcome by her feelings, the Duke interposed:

"But who told you that you were not the legal wife of Rowallan?"

"Why, this Captain Raeburn Carfrae."

"Well, whoever he was, he was a scoundrel. Could he have had any motive for deceiving you?"

Digitized by Google

Zinnia faltered, for she could not forget the excessive warmth of interest he had manifested in her domestic affairs, and before this she had been suspicious. But she answered: "I know not. He brought me a letter signed by one Thalia Thesperius, an actress, in which she claimed Powrie as her husband."

"Thalia Thesperius!" thought the Duke to himself, "she who has had many admirers, from princes to wealthy commoners, and who probably regards the 'holy estate' as she would a new part in her repertoire, not to be played forever—if it is she, from what I know of her, she has been intentionally or unintentionally party to a trick." Then aloud, he said: "I still believe you were the victim of a designing scamp. I do not care to speak of this Thalia Thesperius, but I fear that with some women of her profession imagination leads them to make statements which are not warranted by facts, particularly in their relation with men. But let us concede that in some way she really supposed she was Powrie's wife, the guilt lay with him, not with you—and the law would have held you blameless. Why, in your distress and perplexity, did you not communicate with Miss Rowallan?"

"But she was his sister—and I was benumbed by the calamity that had overtaken me. I knew not which way to turn. As I have seen my position all along, while clear in my own conscience, I felt that my friends would hold aloof from me because I was a mother before I had been made legally a wife."

"I tell you in the light of God's law, and man's too, you were lawfully married on your part, and your daughter was not born out of wedlock. The disgrace is not yours and none attaches to her."

Zinnia swayed herself slowly to and fro in her chair and sighed piteously, and she kept repeating to herself: "Oh, if I had only known! if I had only waited and had not been so hurried. What shall I say to him? How can I look my child in the face?"

"I see you comprehend, Zinnia, that there is another

Digitized by Google

aspect to your story—a serious side to it—which cannot but confront you and which I fear will pain your friends. I mean this second marriage. What induced you to wed this man Youtsay, a person so inferior to yourself and whose habits——"

"Say nothing against Orlop, your Grace," she exclaimed, "for whatever may be his failings, he has always been honest and a loyal husband to me. But," she continued, "I recognize your right to know what prompted me to contract this new marriage. I will be brief, for I know at any moment your friend, the clergyman, may interrupt us. When Powrie was arrested for complicity with Avecomus, I was warned that the officers of the law had been ordered to lay hands on me and hold me as a witness, and disguised in humble attire I escaped their search. I hastened to the Rio de la Plata, hoping to find a steamer ready to set out for England. Great confusion prevailed along the quays as the pampero wind of South America was blowing, and boats moving to and fro and tossed about by the waves were in more or less peril. It may not be known to you that twenty years ago large vessels could not come close to the piers owing to the shallow water, and cargoes and passengers had to be transferred from the shore in these small boats. As I stood forlorn enough on the quay with the wild hurricane raging about me, unnoticed by the drenched and busy throngs, I applied to a sailor for guidance to the next vessel bound for England.

"The seaman had been drinking, but he was not tipsy. He was cheery and good-natured, and insisted on taking the baby in his arms and fondling it with many endearing words. As we stood there an officer of the law approached in a great hurry and inquired whether we had seen a lady attempting to leave the country. I was ready to faint, but Orlop, for it was he, with the greatest coolness replied that no lady had been that way, and turning appealed to me, as his wife, to substantiate his statement. The officer was satisfied and went off. Probably he had not heard that the fugitive had a babe with her, and hence

Digitized by Google

was easily deceived. How he did it, I need not relate, but Orlop managed to lift me into a pitching and rolling boat and smuggled me on board his ship. He procured a second cabin passage ticket for me, and watched over Fiona and myself with the most considerate care.

"I was lonely in London. The few valuables I brought with me I converted into money and finally purchased this little home. Here I took in sewing and earned an honest living as best I could. Orlop, whenever he was in port came to us and the child loved him and he loved the child. I did my best to ascertain the fate of Powrie, but learning nothing, I concluded he had perished on the scaffold. Four years passed away—and Fiona grew—and Orlop came—at last I understood. He asked me to be his wife. Fiona needed a name and a protector—and I was lonely, and there was no one to whom I owed as much as to this sailor—and I married him."

"Of course, you told Orlop everything?"

"Everything."

"And Fiona?"

"Nothing. She has grown up believing herself to be the daughter of Youtsay, fond of her father and he in his turn has idolized her."

"Intelligent parent, praiseworthy worship," the Duke whispered in an aside to himself. "But," he added aloud, "my good Zinnia, your position is beset with cruel difficulties. You have been the innocent victim of complications over which you have had no control, and I see that you are deserving of sympathy, not censure. But there are two husbands living, and I must move carefully if I am to free you from your predicament. Say nothing at present to Orlop about our conversation and trust me, my 'mither' to save you from possible dangers."

"And will you do this, your Grace," she replied, her face lighting up with hope, "and you do not cast me off? You do not condemn and you still call me 'mither.' Would God I had such a son."

His Lordship thought how easily her laudable wish

Digitized by Google

could be accomplished, and was tempted to make an avowal of his love, but was saved from the indiscretion by the sound of Blair Hamley's footsteps on the stairs. As the priest entered the room his changed appearance was noticeable. He was still unshaven, but he had carefully arranged his dress, had turned his soiled collar, had smoothed out as far as possible the wrinkles from his coat, and had done his best to restore his dishevelled hair to order. The face was still careworn, and a suspicion of furrows was traced on his massive forehead, but the erect form was as majestic as ever and the far-off look, which seemed to ally him to the invisible, had returned to his eyes.

"*Pax vobiscum*, daughter," he exclaimed by way of salutation. "I am about to leave this hospitable abode. Christ commanded His disciples when they entered a house to invoke His peace to dwell there; and as I depart I gladly follow His injunction."

"Reverend father," interposed the Duke, "I have assured your hostess of your gratitude——"

"Yes," added Zinnia, "and it would only pain me to receive renewed thanks, especially as I have only done my duty."

"You say well, daughter, but in these sordid days how few are willing to receive the homeless beneath their roof. Neither the world nor the Church now invite the poor, the halt and the lame to their feasts, but only those—the rich and the mighty—who can invite them in return!"

The Duke was quick enough to see that Hamley's priestly ways, and his designation of Zinnia, who was old enough to be his mother, as daughter, was not acceptable to her Calvinistic nature. He signalled her to pay no attention to what was objectionable in his speech, and to prevent any friction he himself talked volubly and loudly, and gently drew the clergyman towards the street door. But Blair Hamley, recollecting himself, disengaged his hand, and standing on the threshold, said with indescribable music in his voice: "Daughter, remember; inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the

Digitized by Google

least of His disciples, ye have done it unto Him. *Pax vobiscum!*"

For the first time the poor woman bowed her head as though the benediction were really from God through His servant, and when she looked up, the men had vanished in the darkness. Not even the echo of their footsteps could be heard as they hastened on their errand in search of Santa Zita. Once more Zinnia resumed her seat at the window on which fell the dismal rays of the street's meagre lamplight. The clock struck nine.

"Why does he tarry? Why does he not come home? Oh Orlop, Orlop! I would not add to your burdens as you do to mine! Can anything evil have befallen him in this guilty city—this city full of violence and blood? He ought to have been back hours ago. Where can he be? What is he doing? What fresh sorrow is to become a crown of thorns for my weary head? Ah me! the drink, the drink! when that gets the upper hand, anything, everything strange, cruel and unnatural may happen!"

So she sat peering into the night, sad and heavy-hearted, as thousands of women sit in the high and low places of our civilization, looking, longing, praying for the coming of husbands, sons, fathers, men, it may be, of warm, generous impulses, who in the end bring back to their homes the voice of the drunkard thick and foul with profanity, the hands of the drunkard red with crime, the eyes of the drunkard inflamed and wild with passion, the brain of the drunkard crazed with terrible spectres and horrible fantasies, and the heart of the drunkard denaturalized and filled with fury. Thus, at last, they come prepared for damning cruelties against mother, wife, daughter, whose only offence is that of patient, long-suffering and entreating love.

Digitized by Google

XXVII

THE FATAL FEAST ON CHRISTMAS EVE

ANGELICA prevailed. She had remonstrated with Pitsligo on the unreasonableness of breaking his engagement with Rowallan. Guests had been invited, and he could not absent himself from the dinner without exciting scandal-mongering gossip. For the sake of his sister's child he ought to go, and afterwards if he desired to avoid personal and social relations with her brother he could consult his feelings and act as he pleased without occasioning idle and perhaps injurious remark.

Had Angelica known all that had taken place doubtless she would have been less insistent. But she was ignorant of the scenes which had so recently been enacted in the palace of the Kincardines and in the mansion at Lancaster Gate, hence, she argued, and would not desist until she had carried her point. Pitsligo yielded, but her victory had weakened her hold on the millionaire.

The disclosure made by the veiled woman had impaired his confidence in every one. The unexpected mention of the family name, and the headstrong and violent conduct of Orlop had intensified his mistrust. He was by nature so guileless and generous that the discovery of what seemed a conscienceless and complicated tissue of lies elaborated for the purpose of cheating, depressed him and made him painfully skeptical of the faith even of those who were near to him. This he strove to conceal from the woman whose former self he had adored, and to whose present self he was irresistibly drawn, but she, while not fathoming the cause, was sensible during the interview on the morning of Christ-

Digitized by Google

mas Eve that he was changed, was cool where hitherto he had been warm, and cautiously non-committal where hitherto he had been free and outspoken.

During the forenoon, when Olympia, who had tried to interest Pitsligo in a chapter of her new novel, and who in reading the love passages had looked languishingly towards him, had left the room in high dudgeon at his imperturbability, and when Angelica, chagrined at his unwonted reticence and reserve had left him to direct various household affairs, he stealthily slipped from the house, and at the nearest hackney carriage stand engaged a four-wheeler. He astonished the drowsy driver by putting a sovereign in his hand as a Christmas gift, and by promising a liberal hire as well. The cab was driven rapidly to the Union Bank, Limited, where Pitsligo had a confidential talk with the officials, signed certain papers and also drew a large sum of money in bank-notes.

Its next stop was at the office of an Australian Steamship Company, whose vessels sail regularly from Southampton, and there some business was transacted, which from the smiles of the manager was eminently satisfactory to the firm. Then the cab proceeded to Ivernia Cottage, where Pitsligo was received with heartiest demonstrations by little Lena. She called him granddad, hung about his neck, prattled merrily concerning the toys and sweets he had brought her, and told him plainly that she would have ceased to love him had he forgotten the presents. The old man fondled her tenderly, and whispered to himself: "She, at least, is sincere."

The unappeasable rage and the unequivocal accusations of Youtsay could not be permitted to pass unchallenged and unanswered. The Hebrew could vindicate him and he must; for while various wrongs might be patiently endured, the charge of cowardly assassination must be met and be laid at rest forever. That stain must be effaced before he turned his back for the last time on civilized Christian England. Pitsligo sought to arrange through Shane a meeting with the Jew. He

Digitized by Google

informed Shane that he must bring Ichabod to see him after Christmas, and the papers, title deeds, and mortgages relating to Ivernia Cottage, so that he might be able to adjust the matters in dispute. Further than this he did not go, for he had no intention of exposing his private affairs to one whose trustworthiness he doubted. He would take his own way of dealing with the Jew, and he had no fear of the result. The purpose of his visit to the cottage accomplished, he bade adieu to Lena with many a caress, and separated from her with the promise that he would seek her out in Australia should they all live long enough to return to the land of flowers.

When towards evening Pitsligo joined Angelica and Olympia in the drawing room, it was evident that he had taken more than ordinary pains with his attire. His scrupulous conformity to the conventional in clothes, however, did not hide but rather accentuated the pallor of his face, and brought into relief its care-worn expression. His stubborn hair, also, which had not known barber's shears since it was operated on in venerable Eskburgh, and which insisted on growing rapidly and irregularly, had refused to be as amenable to the brush as it ought to be. Angelica was tempted to smooth it out with her hands as she had done more than once, but there was an air about him that seemed to say—"Leave me alone, touch me not." She refrained, chilled by his bearing.

"We missed you very much to-day," she remarked, "and I had begun to be uneasy, and was immensely relieved when Calmay announced your return."

"You are always considerate," he replied, "but I had important business that called for immediate action." As he spoke he did not observe that his words pained her. It did not occur to him that, as he had counselled with her on every transaction he had undertaken since their coming together at Eskburgh, his failure to consult her now would grieve and wound her. She said nothing, however.

"I am about to transfer a desirable property at the

Digitized by Google

East End for the benefit of your mission. I shall arrange for several adjoining buildings to be purchased, and shall supply the necessary funds for reconstruction and endowment. There I trust you will rear a home for wage-earning, self-respecting girls—not a charity—at least no more a charity than the education which universities can place within the reach of ordinary means because of their vested revenues. When you have passed on to your reward this benefaction will endear your memory to thousands of struggling girls."

"And why not your own, my good friend?"

"Mine! Why, I shall have done nothing but furnish the money, and any one, however worthless in character, with a sufficiently large bank account, could do the same. I am entitled to no credit. But the love that has sympathized with these young women, that has given the best years of life to their well-being, and has made this proposed refuge possible—your love—it is that and that alone which should be memorialized. I insist that the new building shall be called 'The Angelica.'"

"To which Angelica would you have it dedicated," she inquired demurely, "to this Angelica old and faded, or to the one that was and is now no more forever?"

He failed to hear her question and continued: "The future of the civilized world depends on the future of woman. I need not tell you what you know better than I do, that at present she is beset with evils and temptations in her industrial life which, notwithstanding her repeated and heroic triumphs, are often too much for her, and you will excuse my saying it, but of all bodies sold in the market-place no flesh is as cheap as hers. Multitudes of girls in shops, factories and offices are as pure and chaste as the spotless snow on Mount Tasman which has never yet been invaded by foot of man, but other multitudes have fallen, and are falling now. Not to scholarships, at Oxford, not to picture galleries will I devote a penny of my possessions—but all to the work of bettering the condition of those, whose lot is hard, whose needs are great, and whose friends are few."

Digitized by Google

"I am sure," responded Angelica, "that the Christ of God must have put this good thought in your heart."

"I know not that. I venerate the name of that Holy Being, and yet it is not for thought of Him that I plan, but for pity of those I have seen in their desperate misery."

"I am afraid with all your kindness, you have no spiritual discernment, Mr. Tysford."

"If I understand you, you believe that these elegant ladies and gentlemen, who spend their week with dressmakers and tailors, and occupy most of their time with theatres, clubs and other fashionable follies, and these groups of trades people, with their harsh theology and narrow bigotry, and their solicitude for the salvation of their meagre souls, because they go to Church or Chapel, see farther and deeper into spiritual things than those who live much to themselves, who in solitude ponder the Eternal Mystery, and who find their thoughts too full for utterance."

"What!" interposed Miss Olympia, "do you not believe in the Church? Why, what an awful man you must be, Mr. Tysford."

"Nay, Miss Pinchover, condemn me not unheard. I believe in the Church more than you suppose; if not in the Church actual, at least in the Church possible and ideal, in that which unites and does not divide, in that which enlarges and does not contract the human mind, in that which ministers to joyous views of present life and hopeful views of the hereafter, and does not depress with the incredible belief that He who is a Father to us in this world can ever be other than a Father in the next. The Church that purifies, sweetens, gladdens is God's Church and I honour her, but the Church that darkens our understanding with fear, that converts the privileges of worship into tiresome penances, and commands me to submit my reason and conscience to a priest's authority, is not of heaven, but is of the earth, earthy."

"But the Church, you must admit," stoutly argued the

Digitized by Google

fair, slim authoress, "has done much, very much, for civilization."

With unusual earnestness Pitsligo answered: "What do you mean by civilization? Do you call your East End civilization? Do you call your Rotten Row, with its faded, painted, supercilious women, with its jaded, languid and snobbish men, with its luxurious carriages, its overfed and pampered horses, and its silken and powdered menials, civilization? Or is it your public houses, your sweltering balls, your stuffy theatres, your cheap social rivalries, your streets flaunting vice in the face of the innocent, or your palaces, your coaches, your trade, your bank accounts, and your Lord Mayor shows, with all the other garish displays which tend to hide from a nation's sight the higher worth of truth, justice and the rights of man? If this is civilization, or if it is the larger part, then the Church, whatever else she may have done has left very much undone; and, without denying that she has accomplished something for human weal, it is yet an open question whether her devotion to pomp and show, and her reliance on the external and her occupation with the minutest parts of splendid rituals, are not largely responsible for the supreme attention given to the outward and the sensuous in this so-called civilized life."

He became painfully conscious, as his voice died away, that the ladies who had been listening were really shocked at the unconventional freedom of his views, and he began stammeringly to apologize, when Sergeant Dick relieved the situation by announcing the carriage in a manner highly suggestive of a tremendous secret which could only be mysteriously communicated.

Jabez Pinchover, the perennially well Amaryllis, the astute Odlum, a dashing Major of Hussars, Retardorus Drumrumbum, the Honourable Hyperion Goggles of Goggletown, a large shareholder in the Emancipator Company, Limited, and one Prince Boreus Schlippenbackards, a Russian notable, in whom and in whose belongings the Master of Rowallan was deeply interested, were already present when the three guests arrived at

Digitized by Google

Lancaster Gate. Jabez was descanting in his loftiest style on the dangers to English trade from American "combines;" the Honourable Goggles, slapping repeatedly one fat fist in the other, was demanding that Britons should resist the invader; and the ponderous Amos was listening as one who was being bored by the twaddle of children. On the other side of the fireplace the phantasmagorial Amaryllis was expounding, as well as her asthmatic troubles would permit, to the gallant Major and the polite Prince the marvels of Therapeutical Science, and was deploring the failure to utilize the same in South Africa, where all the imaginary sabre cuts, bullet wounds, splintered legs and shattered arms could easily have been remedied by reading select passages from the Bible and from the other inspired volume which the American prophetess had produced for the thorough edification of mankind. The two gentlemen glanced at each other in blank amazement, inwardly wondering whether they had lost their ability to comprehend or the woman had lost her reason. Happily the arrivals put an end to these queries, and before the interchange of salutations was well over the announcement of Miss Rowallan's name diverted the thought of the gentlemen into another channel.

Tina entered the room timidly, followed by her mother, who remained near the door, apparently admiring her young mistress, but, as her station required, standing far off, near to Dick Gowanlock, who also had presumed to accompany his venerated master. Poor Tina was dismayed and miserable. There was a scared expression on her face, on which also lingered traces of a smudge, the result of frequent wiping of her eyes with fingers not always clean. The costly wrap about her thin, bare shoulders was, as usual, in danger of slipping, and could it have been seen, the wrinkling down of her silken hose about the ankle would have betrayed to all its insecure condition. She gazed round the room anxiously, watchfully, as one who was afraid of a scolding, and then she brightened up as she saw the old Sergeant, stiff as a ram-

Digitized by Google

rod, in the background. Impulsively she articulated a joyous "Ooh!" and was in the act of waving her hand to her trusty friend, when she encountered the stern, threatening look of Mother Quaco.

The soldier saluted, Mrs. Quaco frowned, and terrified Tina sank back and seated herself on a hassock close to Pitsligo and leaned trustingly on his knee. Tysford perceived her agitation, and soothingly laid his withered hand on her soft hair and asked: "What ails you? Are you sick, my child?" While she, suppressing a sob in her throat, answered: "Nothing, sir, nothing. Ooh!" He began to wonder whether this shivering and shrinking girl was not haunted by apprehensions. Could she, as innocent as she seemed, be leagued with others in an atrocious imposition? The old man withdrew his hand from her head and was silent.

Rowallan, who had not been oblivious to what was taking place, ordered Naoroji to request the housekeeper and the soldier to withdraw, and was relieved when dinner was at last announced.

The dining-room had been profusely decorated. Mistletoe and holly abounded, and evergreen crosses and crowns recalled the eternal vêrities of Christianity. All that wealth and art could do had been done to beautify the table and appeal to the taste and appetite of the company. Dignified waiters anticipated the wants of the guests, and in and out among them, superintending every detail of the feast, the obsequious Hindu noiselessly glided and served. Rowallan had placed Mrs. Pinchover on his right, Pitsligo on his left, and next to him the timorous and fidgety Tina, by which arrangement he was able to converse freely with him, and in honeyed and plausible speech attempt to disabuse his mind of adverse and damaging impressions. Pitsligo said nothing. He bowed his head and was all attention.

The conversation became more general as the courses were served and the generous wines were sampled.

"Would you believe it," exclaimed Olympia, addressing herself to the Hussar, but loud enough for all to hear,

Digitized by Google

" our distinguished friend from Australia neither goes to Church nor to the theatre. He says there is too much acting in the former, and not enough in the latter. And what do you think? He asked me the other day whether the stage was still a school of virtue—and my answer was condensed into a single word—the ballet!"

This sally was greeted with laughter, and even Pitsligo smiled, though he did raise his hands by way of protest.

" Oh, you know, Mr. Tysford, I am not misrepresenting you. I may illume your views a trifle, but they are your own, and I would not dare to infringe on your patent."

Another ripple of mirth, and then the Honourable Hyperion Goggles, looking savagely over his napkin, pointing his fork at the Australian as though he were himself to blame for England's decadence, blurted forth: " Do you not think, sir, at the rate America is going that she will hardly leave us a foot to stand on in trade? In that country, sir, lofty sentiments are practically unknown. Government itself is run in the interests of capitalists, and patriotism, literature and religion, and that sort of thing are only valued in proportion as they are convertible into cash. Sir, you ought to be shocked, if you had a particle of manhood left you would be shocked, for those rapacious Yankees mean to take our business away from us, our ships, our steamers, our markets, and reduce us to the condition of paupers—paupers, sir."

Having freed his pent-up feelings, Goggles plunged again with cheerful recklessness into the luxuries of the table, and though his country was on the eve of falling a prey to these insatiable Americans he swallowed with infinite gusto in swift succession two glasses of crusty port. As he had appealed to Tysford, and as the company turned their heads towards him expecting a reply, though reluctant to speak he could not very well keep silent.

" As far as I can judge, we in England are as intent on money getting as they are beyond the sea. Then, if we are to believe reports in our press, America has her own

Digitized by Google

commercial and industrial problems which may wreck her fortune before she has time to rob us of ours. There are two great combinations going on there pregnant with disaster,—the combination of capital and the combination of labour. The latter is rendering it increasingly difficult for non-union men to obtain work, and the former is turning multitudes of people out of employment. Thus they both act so as to prevent many of the industrious from earning their own livelihood. Such a condition of things can't last forever. The day will come when that nation will see that the boasted economy has been at the expense of the artisan and the modest clerk, and that the profit has accrued to the bondholder and has not benefited the consumer. Then the crash will come, and the smash-up will be wide-spread."

"But my dear Mr. Tysford," interposed the expansive Pinchover, seeing that the Honourable Hyperion Goggles was quite at the end of his tether, "don't you see that this financial convulsion in America may, like a tidal wave, overwhelm us over here? What on earth shall we do?"

"What you should do is to rely more and more on your colonies, avoid speculation, and rescue your population from the conditions which are rendering it unfit to cope with younger nations. Manhood is of more value to you than gold. Free yourselves from the artificialities that are everywhere apparent in your social relations, your trade, your churches, and return to nature."

"But," Prince Boreus Schlippenbackards ventured to remark, "is not all the fine talk about nature only fine talk after all?"

Pitsligo, as though he had not heard, rambled on. "What artificial beauty can compare with the joyousness of a fresh spring morning, when the fruit trees are in bloom and the young grass is wet with dew! Or what can we liken in loveliness to the leaves when they have lost their virent hue and the grass has grown dry and yellow! What gorgeous scene in spectacular theatre can thrill the soul as the melting of night into day, or the

Digitized by Google

soft play of silver moonbeams on the troubled unresting sea! And then, how sincere, how impartial, how real and honest is nature. She shows no more respect for the rich man than for the poor. Her cold will freeze the millionaire as unceremoniously as the pauper; her heat will smite the one as indifferently as the other. She never bows her knee, unveils her beauties, sends her sun up earlier or renders her stars more luminous, to please a plutocrat than a mendicant. Her breezes fan us all alike, her harvests feed us, her waters slake the thirst whether we wear silk or rags, and her poisons corrupt the life current in us whatever may be the extent of our possessions or the hopelessness of our poverty."

"Poisons!" exclaimed the startled Rowallan.

"Will Mr. Tysford partake of this ice?"

The polite inquiry was made by Naoroji, as he sought in the most respectful manner to invite the attention of Tysford to the delicacy. It was the last dish on the salver. In passing the ices the Hindu had commenced with Mrs. Pinchover on Rowallan's right, and had proceeded round the table, ending with Pitsligo. He had kept one finger pressed on the bottom of the remaining glass so that it could not be removed without an effort, and he only released his hold when Pitsligo mechanically placed it by his unused wine-glasses. At this juncture a valet entered the room and hurriedly whispered in the ear of Rowallan. The Master was visibly irritated. From the moment Pitsligo had accepted the ice he had gazed on his guest intently, almost rudely, and it was with evident reluctance that he obeyed the summons. Yielding to the imperativeness of the message, however, he rose, apologized to his friends for his brief absence, explaining only that business of the gravest moment demanded his immediate attention, and went out. He hastened to an apartment not far from the dining-room, where Mrs. Quaco impatiently awaited him.

"You have chosen, Madame, a most inauspicious time for a conference. Get through with it as quick as possible."

Digitized by Google

"Powrie Rowallan, do you think I'd have disturbed you hadn't it been for your good? The Sergeant has received a letter for Tysford, forwarded by special messenger from Kincardine House, and he asked me to see that he has it at once."

"Is that all? Give it me and I will ——"

"Not so fast, the mucilage is not dry."

"What, do you mean to say that you have read it?"

"And you may thank your lucky stars that I have. When it was placed in my hand I was all alone. Says I, 'Laissina Quaco,' says I, 'who knows what may be written here about Lancaster Gate. So,' says I, 'better be on the safe side.' A little steam opened the letter and I found out that in a day or two at the farthest our blessed fake will be good for nothing. The letter is from Kincardine, who it seems was asked to learn all he could about a girl calling herself Sibilla Macgillivray, and says that he has traced her to a convent, St. Agatha's Priory, and has discovered that she is the stepdaughter of Orlop Youtsay. He goes on to say that her real father is your worthy self, that her mother was one Zinnia Macgillivray, whom he had known in his childhood, and who had taken Youtsay to be her second husband as she supposed you had been properly hanged for certain unnamable peccadilloes you were guilty of in South America."

"Perdition seize her and them! She alive, and returned to plague me! A thousand curses rest on her and all my foes!" the Master, wild with rage, muttered fiercely as he took in the proportions of the misfortunes that threatened him. For reasons of her own Laissina did not inform Powrie that she had known all along these interesting facts regarding his wife, but she appealed to him not to betray himself and added:

"Kincardine says that by the help of one Reverend Blair Hamley, who is waiting at a place named Ivernia Cottage near Squirries Street for an answer to a letter he has sent to the Bishop of London, he expects to get the girl out of the convent and restore her to her mother. At least two days must pass before this can be brought

Digitized by Google

about, and then he will bring both mother and daughter to Tysford. Now, do you understand why I sent for you? You are forewarned. Pitsligo knows nothing of this as we have the letter, and shall keep it—and you have two days to feather your nest and mine. You've no time to lose, and as you have the old man here you may do something to-night——"

"Perhaps I have already," Rowallan answered.

"What's that?" asked Mrs. Quaco. "Listen! What does it mean? There's tramping of feet and the sound of voices in the dining-room."

Before Rowallan could make reply a lackey, pale and terrified, rushed towards him crying: "Help, sir, oh, help!"

"Why, what has happened to Mr. Tysford?" excitedly inquired Rowallan.

"Mr. Tysford, sir? Nothing, sir. It is not him. Miss Rowallan has fainted, sir, and seems as one dead."

"What, Tina!" shrieked Mrs. Quaco, and without a moment's pause she impetuously rushed into the hallway and burst into the dining-room, and thrusting the guests aside threw herself down on the floor by her daughter, clutching the limp form from the arms of Angelica, and began moaning over her.

The scene was one of disorder and alarm. Dishes had been upset, chairs overturned, and the ladies and gentlemen were talking all at once. Mrs. Pinchover was declaring the fainting spell to be an illusion which would disappear if the company would only listen to the inspired formulary—

"There is no matter, only mind; no sickness, only health; and God is all in all——"

Miss Olympia was irreverently entreating her mother not to be an idiot, and proposing brandy neat. The gallant Hussar was suggesting impossible remedies, and the Russian Prince was dolefully relating how fatal such an attack had proven to his great grandmother, the Empress Maria Plutoveroskie. Mr. Odlum was shaking his head as much as to say that he could if he would,

Digitized by Google

and he would if he believed these feeble-minded folk were capable of grasping his meaning. The Honourable Hyperion was whispering to Mr. Pinchover that probably the young lady had indulged too freely, while Jabez himself, with expanding bosom and with hand extended in oratorical fashion was eloquently apostrophizing poor human nature which cometh forth as a flower and at last is cut down.

The Master of Rowallan had followed Laissina, and gloomily looked on, undecided what to say or how to act; and as he entered the Hindu glided serpent-like by him and disappeared, avoiding the eyes of Rowallan as the snake fears the gaze of the charmer.

"My poor, poor Tina," wailed Mrs. Quaco, "my pretty dear, my lamb, why don't you open your lips? Will you never speak again? What have these fine folks done to you, wake and tell your old mother. You know she's as respectable now as any of them. Hold up your head, dear. Why, I've done everything, everything that I might be respectable for your sake, dearest!" Then sharply addressing the amazed spectators, she cried: "Can't we have a doctor? Do you mean to let her die?"

Mrs. Pinchover, puffing and panting, wabbled towards the prostrate mother, and grunted out her sympathies, adding: "My good woman, all you need to do is to repeat the divine sentence—'There is no matter, only mind; no sickness, only health, and God is all in all.'"

Mrs. Quaco turned upon her sharply and wrathfully retorted: "Hush your rigmarole! Will you jabber here your nonsensical talk, while my child's dying? Go along with you. Powrie! Where's Powrie?"

The entire company was scandalized by this half-crazed female calling their accomplished host by his Christian name. Was there ever such impudence?

"Powrie, I say—— Oh, there you are, are you?" He winced and changed colour. "Send for a doctor. Come and help me. I can't unloose the girl's dress here. She needs freedom from these abominable tight-fitting clothes. Help me to carry her to her room!"

Digitized by Google

Before he had had time to decide on the course to pursue, Sergeant Dick, who had followed Powrie into the room, gently pushing Laissina to one side, picked up the insensible Tina in his arms, and bore her to the upper chamber he had been told she occupied. He said not a word, he asked no one's permission, but acted grimly, defiantly almost, and laid his burden on the bed. Mrs. Quaco kept close to him, wailing, lamenting, and for a moment it seemed to Angelica as though she were cursing.

"There," said Dick, "do all you can for her. I've sent for a doctor, and I think I hear his carriage. I can do no more now, and I must go and look after Mr. Tysford. And, hark ye, if you need me, or Tina needs me, send—and I will heed your signal of distress in the darkness or the light, and go farther than any cable tow reaches, to assist you."

The doctor passed the old soldier on the stairs, and was speedily engaged in giving restoratives and examining the condition of the patient. He declared that the action of the heart was singularly erratic and threatened heart-failure, or the complete collapse of its functions at any moment. It was impossible for him to determine the cause, and he could only, guided by the indications, tax the resources of science to restore the trembling organ to its normal state. After a while he so far succeeded—though he feared the triumph of his skill would not prove permanent—that Tina slowly opened her eyes, and seeing her mother weeping, murmured a pathetic "Ooh!"

The guests had departed. Indeed, the sensational ending to the feast had precipitated their going. They had been unpleasantly affected by what they had witnessed, nor could they understand what right this housekeeper had to call the sick young lady her child, or to be so familiar with their dignified and aristocratic host as to address him as Powrie. Angelica hung her head for shame, and misgivings filled her soul, while Pitsligo shrank more than ever from her brother and was glad to be gone. Rowallan himself was not averse to their de-

Digitized by Google

parture. He sighed a sigh of relief when the door closed behind the last of them.

"How on earth could the scheme have miscarried? How could Naoroji have blundered? Poor child! What if her venomous mother should suspect? Pshaw! that is impossible. It all seems so natural, it was so natural. The child can't be helped—and I have two days, thanks to the intercepted letter, to appropriate what is within my grasp, and then flight. With Thalia? Yes, why not? I shall need consolation, and by and by she ought to pay the penalty for the suffering she has caused."

He had talked half aloud to himself, and as he moved from the fireplace before which he had been standing, his eyes rested on the Hindu. With the flight of the guests Naoroji had unnoticed returned, and stood with gaze averted, with head bent low, and with the servile cringing of a whipped hound in his entire pose.

"Cur that you are, what has brought you back?"

"Sahib!"

"Out on you, to fail me, to miss your mark, upset my plans and murder a weak girl. You ought to be hung."

"Sahib, hear me," Naoroji replied sullenly and abjectly. "How could I help it? After you left the room the young lady and the old man talked together, and suddenly as she laughed she took his ice from his hand and began to devour it ravenously. I did my best to stop her, made pretense of stumbling so as to upset the dish but I miscalculated and fell prone on my face. Five minutes later she had swooned."

"Is there any hope for her?"

"None, Sahib, none, there is no antidote."

"And all a wretched fiasco. The wrong life taken, and the paper with the diagram beyond my reach, and all my dreams of immeasurable wealth brought to nothing."

"Sahib, the paper is not beyond your reach. It shall be yours if I have to tear the old man's heart out.

Digitized by Google

Only forgive me for the death of the young lady, your daughter."

"Hush, my Naoroji," responded Rowallan more kindly, "hush, there must be no violence. Bloodshed on top of what has taken place to-night would involve us all in ruin. Then, as to my child, you did not mean to take her life, and we must endure with fortitude our bereavements. Let us fall back on the heroic philosophy of Gautama Buddha, and comfort ourselves with the thought

> "'Never shall yearnings torture her, nor sins
> Stain her, nor ache of earthly joys and woes
> Invade her safe eternal peace, nor deaths
> And lives recur. She goes
> Unto Nirvana. She is one with Life,
> Yet lives not. She is blest, ceasing to be,
> Om, mani padme om! the Dewdrop slips
> Into the shining sea!'

No bloodshed then,—but get the paper if you can; and if you do, then, after a few more hardships we may return to India richer than any of your rajahs or rajputs, and you in the end may come to be buried in salt—and I—I may be able to dazzle the ancient East with more gold than ever was digested from the light by the dew cross of the Rosicrucians, and may succeed in defeating the Gymnosophists, and from the Hindu esoterics learn the secret of Amrita, the possession of which will yield me a century or more of virile life in which to enjoy my treasures."

Digitized by Google

XXVIII

TINA QUACO ATTAINS TO A BETTER HERITAGE

WHEN Mitchie Carfrae left Lancaster Gate he was out of sorts and dissatisfied with himself. Having grown up as best he could without parental care, enduring the sharpness of poverty and the scorn of the prosperous, he had lived for the little pleasure he could get out of the world, and had become sordid, cynical and profligate. But the stark naked portrait of his father portrayed by the merciless tongue of Mrs. Quaco, and the cold-blooded scheme to rob a friendless girl, had produced in him a sensation akin to revulsion. It was not that he contemplated himself with any special horror.

He was not as yet conscious of a growing resemblance between himself and his abandoned sire. It was that sire, depraved, discreditable, disgraceful, that had developed the first sickening recoil he had ever felt from the ways of self-indulgence. This repugnance, it is true, had not failed to bring with it an uneasy doubt of himself and a dim sense of his own looseness and moral obliquity. Perhaps this, vague though it was, had intensified his angry shame at what he had heard of his dissolute parent, but he was not self-condemned before the bar of his own conscience. He had not, moreover, reached such a point of moral indignation as to impel him to forego his designs on Rowallan's purse, or to abandon his league with Mrs. Gowanlock for the depletion of Tysford's bank account.

It was nearly eleven o'clock at night—the same night on which Tina fell ill—that Mitchie returned to Lancaster Gate. When the servant informed him that the Master of Rowallan had gone to the theatre he was stupefied

Digitized by Google

at the temerity of the man in treating him with such cool effrontery. His absence was a damper and a set back, and in his present mood Mitchie resented it heatedly and violently. He talked excitedly and loudly, and demanded to see Mrs. Quaco. Then for the first time he heard of Tina's singular and dangerous illness. The recital of what had taken place at the feast upset him yet farther, and his request was repeated with more vehemence and urgency. The lackey remonstrated that it was unreasonable to expect the housekeeper to leave the imperilled girl; but the more he argued the more overbearing Mitchie became, and at last when the altercation had reached its height, Mrs. Quaco herself appeared in the hall.

"Miss Rowallan has fallen asleep and the physician orders quiet and silence."

The servant answered, "I was trying, Mrs. Quaco, to persuade this gentleman that it was no time to intrude."

Mitchie from the darkness of the doorway stepped inside and spoke himself: "I know you will excuse my anxiety, but I called by appointment to meet Mr. Rowallan, and have learned that he is out and that his daughter is sick."

"Ah, is that you, Mr. Carfrae? Yes, Miss Rowallan is seriously ill, and I'm glad you came. I want to see you. Come this way."

Mitchie accompanied Mrs. Quaco up-stairs and into a small reception room just off from Tina's chamber. As soon as the door was closed, thinking of the ill-treatment he had received, and forgetting the suffering of his sister, he fretfully inquired: "And so this man defies me? He won't pay for my silence. And in contempt of us, do you know that he has gone to the play for the sake of seeing the acting of Thesperius?"

"What!" Laissina exclaimed, "and with the shadow of death on his house?"

"Death! What, is Tina dying?"

"Hush! come this way!"

She noiselessly led Mitchie into the adjoining apart-

Digitized by Google

ment, and his eyes rested on the wan form of his sister. The light of the candle had been shaded so that he could not well see her face, but the stertorous breathing told its own story of nature's conflict with the inroads of disease and death. He shrank back into the reception room, and Laissina whispered:

"You see I've no heart to talk about your being balked and Rowallan's tricks. Ah me! my poor dearie —so sick, so sick!"

The emotion of the woman was so deep, so real, and her tenderness so surprising to Carfrae, that he was himself touched as he had never been before, and the thought that the sick girl was his sister struck a soft chord in his heart which had never vibrated in the past. In an undertone he asked for an account of the circumstances connected with Tina's illness; and as well as she could, and as coherently as her stifled sobs would allow, she related the story. The narrative affected Mitchie unpleasantly, and the revulsion he had felt when the portrait of his father had been sketched for him, returned with greater intensity: "And the doctor, you say, can't account for the break down?"

"No, he's as much in the dark as I am."

"Umph!" grunted Mitchie, as sitting down he drew up his knee towards his chin with both hands clasped round the tibia, as he was wont to do when in a meditative mood. For a few moments he remained absorbed in thought, his face darkening all the while, and the lower jaw protruding more and more, sure sign with him of a growing conviction. At last he spoke:

"Do you remember what you told me of Jorge Avecomus and of Rowallan's intimacy with him at Buenos Ayres?"

"Certainly," she answered, "why do you ask? What's in your head?"

"I hardly know myself, but you said Tina was taken ill at dinner, and as I recall the story the guests of the professor were also done for at their meals. Eh?"

"Hush! hush!" she replied, "talk low for God's sake.

Digitized by Google

But it can't be. Since I've been in the house I've not seen anything to connect Rowallan with the crimes of those far off days."

"Umph, I may be wrong, but I can't shake off the notion that Avecomus is mixed up with this sickness."

"But Mitchie, why should he want to kill her?"

"I don't know. It's all a guess, you see. But then, he would be her heir, and he would be rid of her and of you, too, old lady. You couldn't claim her as your child when you have given out that she was his daughter by another woman—his wife. If you were to go before a magistrate and swear to the truth it would be much easier for judge and public, with your past misfortunes rising up against you, to believe that you were going for blackmail than to credit what you would have to say of Jorge Avecomus and his convenient way of disposing of his guests."

He still held on to his bent leg as he talked, and he slowly swayed to and fro in his seat, while Laissina, spellbound by his words and his manner, in spite of herself succumbed to the suspicion by which he was haunted. She drew her chair closer to him. Her face was pallid, and her coarse features betrayed a fierce conflict raging within. She clutched at his sleeve and breathed in his ear:

"If I knew, if I only knew, if I was sure that he had done for my child, my darling, I'd kill him."

"But you can't know, Laissina, you can only suspect, and be on your guard."

"No, there is one other thing I can do. And if Tina dies the game's up anyway, and I'll get even with him. I can produce the true heiress and keep him out of the money."

"What! do you know where she is?"

"Yes," and hurriedly Laissina repeated all that she had learned from the letter she had intercepted, explaining that the Sibilla in St. Agatha's was the Fiona Youtsay of whose danger from the attention of a titled admirer he had himself spoken weeks before. He re-

Digitized by Google

called the maiden without difficulty, and the impression her beauty had made on his susceptible heart, and he gloated over the memory of that entrancing vision. No wonder that he let his foot seek the ground, and smacked his lips with satisfaction at what might be. Laissina, growing more and more convinced that Rowallan had tampered with her child's life continued:

"But it will not do to bring this Fiona or Sibilla forward at once or without a legal protector. She must be got out of the convent and kept ready to claim her own and must be married that her husband can defend her rights."

"Yes, I see that if Rowallan is to be paid for his treachery. But how can it be brought about?"

"You, Mitchie, must do it," and Laissina added with brutal frankness, "you are not particular as to your wife so long as she has the cash. You wanted to marry Tina for her fortune. Get this one out of the convent and marry her."

Mitchie was dazzled by the proposal. It chimed in with his greed and with his amatory nature as well. He needed no urging. But not unreasonably he inquired: "How can I get at her? How make her take me for her husband?"

Something of the old hard self of the woman revived, and she answered harshly: "Make her, make her—there are more ways than one of making a girl glad to be wedded. But you are no novice. You need no instruction. Enter her prison any way you can, by stealth, by deception—disguised as a clergyman, if you must. My, Mitchie, what a priest you would make! But there, you must decide on your own line of action. Free her, wed her—by fair means or foul, claim her fortune, spite Rowallan, curse him!"

A low groan was heard emanating from the sick chamber.

"Oh, my Tina, my dearie, my sweet one!" And Mrs. Quaco with tears in her eyes and sobs in her throat, entered where the sufferer lay. In a moment she

Digitized by Google

returned, the look of trouble in her face and the supremacy of grief revealed in the softened tone of her voice:

"O Mitchie, Mitchie, what if she dies? My baby sleeps—but if she should die? And she has seen no minister, and we've been talking of revenge and marriage. You mustn't let your sister die like a heathen. Yes, I recollect. O my poor head!—there is a clergyman, Rev. Blair Hamley, living at a place called Ivernia Cottage at the East End—I heard so to-day. Take a cab and go for him. Here is money. Don't lose a second with foolish talking about Fiona. All that can wait. We may be wrong. The child may get well. Our duty is to do what we can for Tina. Hurry, bring the priest, even if you have to force him to come."

She spoke energetically, even fiercely, and pushed Mitchie towards the door, and he, poor fellow, sped on his way and was soon being driven furiously in the direction of Squirries Street. Mrs. Quaco went back to the sleeping Tina, and wept as she watched. It seemed to her that she ought to pray. She had not prayed for many years. She clasped her hands and slipped upon her knees, but when she began—"Our Father who art in heaven"—the image of Jorge Avecomus rose before her, and a mocking laugh that sounded like the voice of Raeburn Carfrae, long dead, echoed in her conscience, and she cried, "I can't, I dare not. What have I to do with God, or God with me?" She buried her face in the clothing of Tina's bed and wept bitter tears of hopeless remorse.

Mitchie succeeded in his mission, and as the morning of Christmas dawned Blair Hamley arrived at Lancaster Gate. Mrs. Quaco's envoy, also, in addition to capturing the minister, had gained some valuable information, which might prove eminently serviceable to him in the immediate future. As he had been compelled to wait about half an hour for the return of the clergyman to Ivernia Cottage, he had made the acquaintance of Foyle Shane, and had found out that that high-principaled citizen would

Digitized by Google

not object—for a consideration—to receive a distressed female beneath his roof, be she single or married. Also, during his drive with Blair Hamley he had been able by cunning catechizing to learn much about convents, nuns and priests, and the sacred relation of the latter to the former.

He felt well repaid for his trouble. Now that this mission was ended, and he had gathered from the servants that the condition of Tina remained unchanged—neither better nor worse—he entrusted his charge to their care and returned to Gower Street, there to think out a plan for the attainment of his wishes, financial and matrimonial. On alighting from his cab at his lodgings he was vexed and chagrined to discover that the money Mrs. Quaco had given him had disappeared. His pocket had been picked. He was puzzled. Jamie Jenks, the new girl, had to assist him to the tune of half a crown to satisfy the demand of the driver, which emboldened her to indulge in some highly feminine observations on the folly of young men remaining out all night "a-sowin' wild oats when they might remain out of 'arm's way, marry a 'spectable 'ouse maid an' be 'appy all their days."

An hour or so before Blair Hamley reached Lancaster Gate, Tina awoke from her prolonged troubled sleep. As she opened her eyes she sighed a long plaintive "Ooh!" and her mother who had not left her couch, placed her arms under her, rearranged the pillows, and inquired:

"Are you in pain, dear? Tell your old mother. Let me call the doctor."

"No, mother, not yet. It is my heart. It thumps, thumps, and seems to get bigger, and then it stops like and sinks, sinks, sinks. And then I feel so weak, so weak that I fear my body may drop from me as my old gown used to slip, slip from my shoulders. Ooh!"

There was a world of misery in that "Ooh!" and Mrs. Quaco felt it and moved slightly, saying, "the doctor had better be called." But Tina clung to her mother, and breathing with difficulty, entreated her not to go, adding

Digitized by Google

faintly: "By and by you may wake him. But there are some things I want to talk about. Give me a few drops of the medicine."

A pause ensued, and she seemed less distressed. After yielding for a few minutes to the yearning for rest, she again spoke to her mother, slowly, painfully, and with intermitting struggles for breath:

"I have had a dream, mother, all about streets of gold and palaces, ooh! The darkness had closed tight about me, ooh, and I was smothering, when a big angel came to me. He wasn't like angels of the picture books. He had no wings, no sword and no harp. He just looked like a man till he opened wide his eyes, and when they were open they were so bright that I knew he had come right from heaven. He said to me: 'Tina, you have lots of money, but it ain't good for much, as it won't buy nothing worth while. Wouldn't you like to have real riches?' And I said to him, though I was frightened, 'Yes, sir, for mother's sake.' He smiled sweetly, and I heard him say, 'Real riches can't be given away, but your mother can get them for herself.'

"Then he came close by and I wasn't afraid any more—and he touched me. His big eyes full of light cheered me up, and he lifted me in his arms out of the darkness, and the tight feeling went from my chest, and I breathed easy like. He carried me away, away, away, and when we had gone ever so far in the sky, I looked back and saw Lancaster Gate, and the place was all dirty and ragged, and worms wriggled and crawled over the furniture, and the people had their faces turned from me, but their hands were begging for more gold. I could hear them groan and quarrel, and I knew they were all unhappy. Then the house faded away, and we went on and on again till we reached a beautiful city, with glistening gates and walls that shone like the sun. The brightness was so great that my poor eyelids blinked, and it made my clothes white and dazzling. I felt my hair shine, and my face shoot out rays of light, and something whispered to me that I should never more walk in darkness. But

Digitized by Google

when I turned to thank my good angel for bringing me to such a grand place, where there were no beggars, or dirty children, no cabs, carts, or organ-grinders on the streets and no public houses on the corners, and no damp, moldy kitchens, he had left me and I saw him never again.

"Yet, I was not afraid, and I walked on, and on, and on, and met so many people, and they were singing about some one on a throne, and they were all sweet and lovely. And I thought how ugly I must seem to them, and I wished I was pretty. Just then I came to a sea—it was like a big looking-glass, and I thought I would have a peep at myself. But when I saw my face I couldn't believe it was me. My, but it was pretty, so pretty, and, ooh, I clapped my hands and laughed, and I wanted to go back that you might see Tina."

As the girl babbled about her angel and the celestial city, her mother listened with a heart bursting with grief, and there came unbidden to her memories of her own innocent girlhood, of Sabbath bells, of the good vicar, and of herself in simple peasant's dress listening to the story of the Christ who died, and who had opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and in her agony she cried in smothered accents: "I'm a woman of unclean lips. God be merciful to me a sinner!"

If Tina observed her mother's anguish she did not betray the fact, but, after a pause, her luminous eyes searched the countenance of Laissina, and speaking timidly, she said: "You won't be angry if I ask you a question?"

"O my lamb, how could I be angry with you when my heart's breaking?"

With an effort to command her breath the sufferer whispered: "Tell me, is *he* my father?"

"Don't ask, Tina, don't ask," and the poor woman cowered as before her judge.

"I won't ask, you needn't say, for I know now. Ooh! I don't want to be his child."

"Tina, dear, you will never understand—you couldn't.

Digitized by Google

I hope you never may." She spoke passionately. "But this you may know. I was led on that I might be respectable again, and that you might always be respectable."

"But, mother, what do you mean? I'm in the dark."

"Why, Tina, to be respectable is—to be respectable—to make every one look up to you, to make the servants fear you, to be admitted into any part of the theatre and not be crowded into cheap back seats, and to be treated like a lady and not—well—as something else."

"But, mother, if you are not a real lady, what then? Isn't it better to be right than to be respectable?"

"Perhaps it is, darling," Laissina Quaco faltered.

"Don't you know, mother, I was happier at Mrs. Gowanlock's than in this house? On Gower Street I was scolded and I had to work hard, make fires, help the cook, carry breakfasts to the top of the house, and my clothing was cheap and poor. But then I was Tina Quaco. I had nothing to hide. I was myself. No one said pleasant things except Mitchie—sometimes, and dear old Dick—always, and I made the best of things. But since I've been Miss Rowallan, and I've had silks, wines, carriages, I've been watched, warned—and I've been afraid—of what I knew not—for you wouldn't tell me. I have felt like a sneak and a liar. Ooh! mother, I'd rather be Tina Quaco looking every one straight in the eye than to be Miss Rowallan dreading to be found out—and not knowing what there was to be found out. Better be poor Tina Quaco right than rich Tina Rowallan wrong and respectable."

When she finished speaking, her breathing, which had been difficult all along, became unusually hard, and Mrs. Quaco lifted her up and held her to her bosom. A drop or two of medicine was given to stimulate the heart's action, and her mother besought her not to talk. But the paroxysm became so sharp that the physician was hastily summoned, and while he was able to abate her pain, he shook his head sadly and ominously.

It was just at this juncture that Blair Hamley entered

Digitized by Google

the chamber. Mrs. Quaco and the doctor recognized him by his garb without any introduction, and the latter conferred with him privately before he approached the bedside of the sufferer. She was resting more easily—though the relief could not be for long—and was rather calmed than startled by the appearance of the priest.

"Daughter," he began, "I have heard that one of God's dear children might be happy in her sickness to hear of His sweet grace."

The name he gave her, the music of his voice, and the noble purity of his face appealed to her, and she gazed wonderingly at him as he spoke. She knew nothing of high church and low church contentions, and the religious knowledge she had picked up at her country school about God, Christ and the saints was neither deep nor accurate. But she listened; she could not help but listen to such an one as Blair Hamley. He talked soothingly, persuasively of Jesus, of His atonement, of the heavenly mansions He had gone to prepare, and of His readiness to receive and save even the chief of sinners. Another listened as he talked and greedily drank in his words. It was Mrs. Quaco. Such a message she had not heard since her youthful days, if she had heard it then. She applied it to herself and began to hope that there might be forgiveness even for her. When the clergyman knelt and prayed, following no printed page, but pouring out his soul in language of his own before the Throne, she lifted up her own poor suppliant hands, and when he had said Amen, she added aloud the penitent's petition: "God be merciful to me the sinner!"

The doctor stood with his hand on the girl's heart, and the expression on his face gave sign that the end was not far off. Blair Hamley, having risen from his knees, placed his arm round her that he might whisper in her ear the promises of God, while Laissina Quaco, subdued, overcome and helpless clasped her hands in anguish. Tina moaned and murmured: "Ooh! my heart, my heart!" The priest lamented that the Eucharist could not be administered, and Mrs. Quaco turned as though to send to

Digitized by Google

the parish church for the sacred elements. But it was already too late. The change had come. A terrible spasm, the sudden torturing contraction of the heart's muscles, the awful throb that terminated its beating, the clutching of the priest's supporting arm, a flash of recognition as she gazed into his shining eyes, and, gasping, exclaimed—"Ooh! the angel, the angel"—and the soul of Tina Quaco had attained to its enduring heritage.

Her head lay still and limp on Blair Hamley's shoulder, her hair falling as a mourning veil over her half-naked breast. Her mother stunned and speechless sank to the floor and crouched there burying her tear-wet face in her hands—while all over the city and throughout the land the morning Christmas bells were chiming: "Joy to the world, the Lord has come," and happy thousands were shaking hands, sending gifts, and thanking God for the return of the glad time when a virgin's child was born to bless mankind.

When the gloomy tidings spread through the house, the Master of Rowallan was on the eve of getting out of bed. He had returned home late and in no agreeable mood, for on his going to the theatre with the hope of regaining his ascendancy over Thalia Thesperius, he had discovered that she had not been slow to take a new admirer,—Prince Boreus Schlippenbackards. She declined to receive his card, and the Prince whom he met face to face bestowed on him an icy stare, and passed on as though he had not been his guest earlier in the evening. Hence, on Christmas morning when Naoroji roused him, and with blanched face and trembling lips announced the death of Tina, he was far from being in an amiable frame of mind. The Hindu, however, totally misapprehended the cause of Rowallan's sullen, testy and fretful temper. He naturally connected it with the death of his daughter, and now that the tragedy had reached its inevitable climax he feared for himself. But he was immeasurably relieved when he observed, which he was quick to do, that the Master, for reasons he did not explain, displayed no sorrow and never recurred to the subject of Tina's rela-

Digitized by Google

tionship. Other and graver issues were uppermost in Rowallan's mind—the escape of Thalia from his clutches, and now the possible complications in his affairs to which the death of Tina might give rise. Mrs. Quaco in the excess of her grief might hasten to betray him before he could get his resources in hand, therefore she must be humoured and cajoled. Tysford, when he should hear the sad news might cancel all promises and decline without authority from the courts to convey to the father the property held in trust for the daughter; hence he must be kept in the dark until this holiday was over. For the present Tina's death must be concealed. In a few hours by persistent working he could have everything in order for flight, and not be compelled to abandon the metropolis empty-handed.

"Naoroji, you must take this note to my sister, Miss Rowallan," and he began pencilling on a sheet of paper, "and I forbid your telling any one of my loss. Understand, you are to create the impression at Kincardine House that my daughter is doing as well as could be expected, and that visitors are not to be received to-day."

"Sahib," and the Hindu without the twitch of a facial muscle indicating the astonishment he felt, made an ornate salaam, "consider your command obeyed."

"And as you go out tell the servants that as it is Christmas day I forbid signs of mourning to be displayed on the house."

Having decided on his line of action and having taken preliminary precautions, he went in the direction of Tina's chamber. As he did so he met the physician, and they indulged in some well-bred commonplaces suitable to the bereavement, including appropriate references to a liberal *honorarium*, and the man of science retired with the highest opinion of Rowallan's intelligence. The Master continued on his way, and soon stood in the presence of the dead. He had not expected to find any one in the room except Laissina, and he was disagreeably surprised when he saw a clergyman comforting the bereaved mother.

Digitized by Google

In the most mournful voice he could command, Rowallan expressed his gratitude to Mrs. Quaco for her motherly care of his child, and for the sympathy of her sorrow in his sorrow. Laissina turned like a tigress on him; her eyes, red with weeping, flamed indignation against him, and she thrust herself between him and the dead as though to guard the remains from contamination.

"Away with you," she cried, with the rising intonation of fury in her speech, "have done with your lying. You're face to face with death and with a priest of the Catholic Church, and lies are useless. Thank God, this girl of mine was no child of yours. Her father was no saint, but he was never such a black-hearted wretch as you are."

This passionate explosion bewildered and shocked the clergyman, and it naturally confused and angered Rowallan, who exclaimed, "Why, what are you saying, woman? Have you lost your reason?"

"No, I'm not mad. I remember many things clearly. I remember one Jorge Avecomus, do you? I remember how his guests sickened at his table, and died! Don't you recollect? You were there. I have been wondering, wondering whether Jorge Avecomus could have had anything to do with my Tina's death. What do you think?"

Rowallan realized what was passing through the mind of Laissina, and he was also sharp enough to discern that she was not sure, and had been made suspicious by her bereavement. By a strong effort of his will he controlled himself, and with comparative calmness replied:

"I have no idea what you are talking about, Mrs. Quaco, and fear that your reason has been unhinged by your night's vigil. You had better retire and seek repose and I will send for my sister, Miss Rowallan, who will fittingly care for the remains of my dead child."

"Your sister, your child!" retorted Laissina. "Tina Quaco isn't your child, and you know it. Have done with your hypocritical talk. And as for your sister, none

Digitized by Google

of your blood and name shall come near my darling. These hands that cared for her in infancy shall be the only ones to shroud her for her narrow bed. Away with you and yours! You are all as bad as I am; and God knows I wouldn't be as bad as I am if it had not been for one who was your equal in station though never in infamy. Curse you! you gentlemen are a heartless lot."

With well simulated tones of commiseration in his voice, Rowallan addressed Blair Hamley: "You must see, sir, from her manner and her speech how deranged the poor woman is. We had best withdraw and I will send some of the domestics to her. Do you have charge in this parish?"

"No, sir. I am labouring in Whitechapel."

"How singular! How came you here? You have no legal right to——"

"I know it, sir, but I was sent for, and besides distress annuls or ought to efface ecclesiastical boundaries."

"That may be for all I know or care," Rowallan replied frigidly; "but your ministrations are over, and as I must arrange the funeral with the authorized clergyman, it will not be necessary for me to tax your patience longer. As you were prompt in coming and have come doubtless at considerable inconvenience, favour me by accepting this evidence of my gratitude."

Laissina, who had been standing apart, with her arms folded defiantly, and whose lips had never ceased to move, now broke out beseechingly, as she saw Rowallan offer Hamley a bank-note:

"Money! as you love your soul, priest of God, and as you may love mine, touch not a penny. He can't lay his hand on a shilling that is not blackened by deceit and lies, or stained with innocent blood. I know nothing of you. You comforted my lamb in her last moments, and the very manner of you has led me to feel that there is something real in religion, and that there may be hope for a woman that is a sinner. But touch a sixpence of his ill-gotten riches, and I would thrust you and all

Digitized by Google

thoughts of good from me, and you'd complete what another began—you would damn eternally my soul."

"Oh, this is scandalous, this is going too far! This is incredible insolence! Were it not that her mind has given away I would hand her over to the police."

"Police! Powrie Rowallan, do it! I dare you."

Blair Hamley, not knowing what to think of this indecent strife, approached Laissina to quiet her, if possible, and incidentally to assure her that he had no thought of accepting money, when she nervously drew him yet farther apart and whispered:

"Hush! I trust you, trust you with more than life, with my soul. Hear me! Were I to pay them, would the good people at the cottage, think you, permit a poor woman to bring her dead to rest for a day there, and would you say the service?"

Seeing the eyes of Rowallan on him, and dumbfounded by what he had heard and witnessed, the clergyman could only whisper in return: "I think so, I will send you word, but then he has the legal right in the case."

Laissina flushed up angrily again and was about to answer, when Rowallan in a more peremptory manner asserted his authority, and gave the clergyman to understand that he resented these private communications with his housekeeper, and that farther invasion of a parish not his own was hardly consistent with good breeding. Blair Hamley drew himself up to his full height, and without comment extended his hand in blessing over the dead girl and the living woman, then with an air of dignity said:

"You will greatly favour me, sir, by calling a servant to show me the door."

"I will do so myself."

When they had gone Laissina fell on her knees, and prayed, and prayed. This communion with her Maker soothed her. From her supplications she rose to array the body of her beloved for the burial. A simple white gown, the cheapest and plainest, was selected from the wardrobe, such as a poor shop girl might wear, and at

Digitized by Google

once it suggested the innocence and the poverty of the wearer. Recalling Tina's fondness for Sergeant Dick, she sent a note to him, and that trusty warrior was soon at hand. The old man was amazed to learn that the dear girl had passed on, and his sorrow was as sincere as it was deep. It was necessary to take him into her confidence, particularly as he expressed his indignation that word of the death had not been sent immediately to Kincardine House.

Laissina told him that she had sent no message because she did not wish Miss Rowallan to have anything to do with her daughter's funeral; and, as she had plotted with Rowallan to impose on Tysford, she could not presume to approach him even though Tina was entirely ignorant of their machinations. All that was done with now, and as for herself she felt her guilt so keenly that nothing would be too hard for her to undertake that reparation might be made. She asked the Sergeant to tell Pitsligo her story after her dear one had been laid away. Now, in her child's name she appealed to generous Dick not to forsake her. The soldier was quite unnerved by the recital, and his feelings were divided between disgust and pity for the woman. Yes, for Tina's sake he would help the forlorn and friendless mother. After this conference he went out and that afternoon a plain deal coffin was admitted by the back door at Lancaster Gate. Later a satisfactory answer was received from Blair Hamley to her singular request; and still later, when Mrs. Quaco thought that she ought to arrive at some understanding with Rowallan, she was informed that the Master had gone to his office and had left word that no one must interrupt him.

During that Christmas night two strange events occurred.

An undertaker's closed conveyance and a modest coach arrived at Lancaster Gate; a plain small coffin was deposited in the one, and Mrs. Quaco and Sergeant Dick entered the other. The two mourners were silent, but their distress of mind was evident. The carriages took

Digitized by Google

their way to the East End and came at length to Ivernia Cottage. Blair Hamley and Foyle Shane received the party, and the coffin was borne within and placed on an improvised bier. The former had prevailed on the latter for a suitable compensation to furnish a temporary shelter to the childless mother and her dead. Renewing his promise of secrecy until after the funeral, Dick returned to the West End. The house was still and Tina lay in state surrounded with flickering candles and robed in her virgin white, as white as the chiselled marble, and as sacred as a nimbus-crowned saint. The old smile had come back to her face, and her glassy eyes peering through the scarcely closed lashes suggested their frequent puzzled look, while her lips just slightly parted disclosing her pearly teeth, seemed ready to exclaim in solemn awe as the glories of eternity burst upon her—"Ooh!" Lena and her weak-minded mother were asleep up-stairs, and Mrs. Quaco and Blair Hamley kept the vigil over the dead. The man of God would often bow his knees in prayer, and once as he did so Laissina in lowliness and self-abasement crept to his side, and sinking to the ground with her forehead almost touching the dust, she humbly entreated:

"Oh, pray for me, sir, a woman who is a sinner."

Lifting up his head, he answered: "Daughter, does any man condemn thee?"

"All men condemn me, sir."

"Yet I condemn thee not!" And thinking of his own inward apostasy from the ideal of his ministry, he added—"for I, too, need heaven's grace. Go, but sin no more."

While this scene was being enacted in the East End wilderness, another, different in character, but sadly significant, was taking place in the West End paradise. It must have been near to midnight when Pitsligo was startled from his sleep by what seemed to be a cold shadow swiftly passing over him. He also fancied that he heard a soft, slipping, sliding movement. While far from superstitious and unacquainted with fear, he could

Digitized by Google

not help shivering, and peered uneasily through the obscurity of his room. For a moment he thought he saw a motionless form crouching on the floor, but when he gazed again more searchingly it had fled, if it had ever been there. He lay on his back with his eyes wide open, and listened, listened. There was not a sound, only silence. The strain became unendurable, and the rich man threw back the plaid that covered him, abandoned his couch and procured a light.

As he expected he was alone, and he began to smile at his apprehensions, when near a half open window he discovered the coat he had laid aside and close to him when he retired. A cursory glance revealed the fact that it had been rifled. The precious diagram furnishing minute information as to his treasures was gone, and with it the skean dhu he had so recently recovered. A few rare and valuable diamonds had been purloined, and the chronometer had likewise disappeared. As he stood contemplating the garment, and saying to himself: "Robbed, robbed—always being robbed!" his hand touched the jewelled locket he ever wore, and he added: "Well, this at least escaped the thief. Ah, me! can it be that a rich man only excites cupidity and crime, and never love and loyalty? Ah, me, and what shall I do now?"

Digitized by Google

XXIX

MITCHIE IN SPITE OF HIMSELF BECOMES A HERO

SANTA ZITA as a devoted Anglican grouped heathen and dissenters in one and the same class, and never could explain why the Divine Being in His inscrutable wrath had inflicted both on the long-suffering British Empire. While she inwardly rebelled against every courtesy shown the Nonconformists by the clergy, and resented the presence of their representatives in St. Paul's Cathedral on the occasion of her Majesty's Jubilee, she was nevertheless a very worthy woman and a good deal of a saint after the ecclesiastical type.

When she met with Fiona at Ivernia Cottage she grieved over her because she was a Presbyterian, in the same way as she would have mourned if the girl had been a worshipper of the Grand Lama. Her mediæval temperament, a temperament which is essentially artistic and romantic, was from the outset sympathetic with Fiona in her narrative and in her heroic determination not to wed the Duke on account of some family disgrace, only vaguely hinted at, and her desire to devote her life to a noble cause where friends would never find her. Consequently, she thought it would be a mercy to rescue this fair heretic as a brand from the Nonconformist burning; and as probably a maiden capable of inspiring a peer of the realm with love had powerful and perhaps wealthy friends, it might be of service to the Church if she were attached to one of the religious houses which have been multiplying in England since the rise of the Tractarian movement. Hence, after much plausible speech she persuaded Fiona to accompany her to St. Agatha's Priory, a Convent of enclosed nuns, where the Mother Superior,

Digitized by Google

Guinever Camelyard, welcomed them, and took the wanderer under her protecting care.

Fiona was not bigoted and had never been particularly spiritually minded. Born and bred a Presbyterian, and accepting that faith as interpreted by its broader school, and knowing from common report that the old Church of Scotland was departing from its simpler worship, she did not regard her ritualistic surroundings with any marked aversion. When she had been in the convent only a day, however, and had been informed that her religious condition was unsatisfactory, and certain strange and unfamiliar practices had been urged on her attention, she began to reflect and wonder whether this was a Protestant institution after all.

If any one was fitted by personal demeanour and subtle charm to captivate the imagination and confuse the reason and conscience of the overwrought neophyte, it was Guinever Camelyard. She was not fifty years of age. Her figure was tall and stately; her face rarely lost its fascinating, benevolent expression; her voice was soulful and never ceased to be sweetly womanly when she was compelled to issue the severest mandates. Indeed, the greater the suffering she saw endured in the name of Christ the more heavenly and beatific her countenance became, and the more mellifluous her speech. Born of an ancient family, heiress of considerable wealth, after a fashionable career in which intimacy with an exalted personage and a baccarat scandal played a notorious part, she abruptly abandoned the world and adopted the conventual idea in its extremest form. Owing to her ascetic piety and to her rank and wealth, she rapidly advanced, and was finally consecrated with imposing ceremonies as the Mother Superior of St. Agatha's.

Fiona was not lodged in a cell, but in a plainly furnished room, where her meals were served and where Guinever could easily have access to her. The Mother spent hours with her, battling her scruples, and expatiating on those ecclesiastical fictions to which the hierarchies of Christendom so fondly cling. Her Scotch

Digitized by Google

pupil, Scotch in ancestry if not in birth, did not fail to ask for Scriptural authority for these mighty assumptions, and stoutly struggled for awhile to defend the cause of Knox and the Covenanters.

Her intellect, however, had not been drilled for such encounters, and she had no adequate knowledge of history, so gradually she became less confident, less contentious, and at last yielded everything, especially as they were all Protestants and denominational differences were only of meagre import. She, therefore, expressed her willingness to be received into the Church, which was a preliminary qualification for admission into the sacred sisterhood of St. Agatha. But this change could not be effected without the aid of a priest. The former father confessor, Blair Hamley, had been suspended and his successor had not arrived, and could not visit the convent until after Christmas.

Fiona, therefore, had to wait, and as she waited she could not but observe, and as she observed the less contented she became with her own decision. One pitiable object touched her heart to the quick. It was the portress, Sister Fridswida, old and decrepit, who without adequate protection from the cold, had to answer the outside door, and was not permitted to enter the refectory. Her meals, mere scraps, were eaten in the yard, and she was compelled to remain there though she complained of rheumatism. Nor could Fiona fail to be impressed by the slavish adulation paid by the sisters to the Mother Superior. While they professed to love her, from the whisperings overheard it was not difficult to make out that she was feared and dreaded. It was humiliating, also, to learn from their talk that a nun had to vow obedience without question to the Spiritual Mother, and to yield herself as wax to be molded unresistingly according to the Mother's will.

She was further disillusioned and shaken in her resolution when Guinever approached the subject of mortification and the discipline, and dwelt at length on the exquisite ecstasy that came to the soul, and the sense of oneness

Digitized by Google

with Christ, as the sweet scourge stung the flesh. Horrified at what she heard, Fiona replied that she did not see how a woman could torture herself in any such way. The benevolent Mother responded, her face shining all the while as with a celestial sheen, that some good friend like herself would gladly help the timid novice in guiding the chastening scourge, whose seven knotted lashes wrought in the true believer the rapturous transports of Paradise.

Fiona lay awake many hours thinking of these things, and one night was convinced that she heard the groans of women in pain. These mournful sounds reached her again on the following night, and so oppressed her that she determined to ascertain, if possible, their cause. Hence, with her sleeping gown gathered close around her, and stepping lightly in her stocking feet she descended the stone stairway and came to the chapel. Hiding in the doorway she saw:

A gloomy sanctuary dimly illumined by altar tapers, thronged with frenetic and weeping sisters, and in their midst prone on the floor one of their number insufficiently clothed to shield her body from the winter's cold, stretched, face downward, in the form of a cross, and with her tongue inscribing in the dust the same form as best she could. The other women stepped over her, beat passionately on their breasts and groaned while the organ wailed the Miserere. Guinever sat apart and presided over the scene, placid, unruffled.

Judged by the cloudless and peaceful expression of her face, the Holy Mother was only contemplating and luxuriating in the sight of a penitent soul progressing through the earthly purgatory of pain and shame to the felicity of an endless glory. The more the penitent writhed and agonized, the more serene and beatified the Mother became. When this penitential act of self-degradation had reached the close Guinever gave a signal and the altar-lights were, with the exception of two poor candles, extinguished. The nuns fell on their knees, uncovered their shoulders and the strokes of the

Digitized by Google

self-inflicted discipline fell with monotonous and sickening regularity, while the organ once more discordantly ground out the awful Miserere. The Mother Superior tranquilly and benignly moved among the fanatical sisters, stimulating the hesitating, and at times, without emotion, mercifully seizing some wavering hand as good as applied the scourge herself and in no feeble or doubtful way. When she thus came to the assistance of the timid, whose soul was near being deprived of the ravishing delight resulting from oneness with Christ in His agony, her own eyes dilated with supreme satisfaction, and she tasted the sweet consciousness of having wrought a meritorious deed.

Fiona staggered from the door of the chapel before this cruel ordeal had been completed. She could endure no more; terrified and feeling in her own flesh the sting of the discipline, she retreated to her chamber and there in the grim darkness reflected:

"And this is Christianity on the close of the nineteenth century. These barbarities on the one side and silken parade and mummery on the other. All this in the name of the loving Christ who never afflicted a human being, who never dressed Himself in the glittering robes of heathen or Jewish priests for the sake of rendering His ministry more authoritative or impressive! My faith is smitten! my reason fails me! God save me from blank unbelief; for if this is religion, then infidelity becomes the real gospel of glad tidings to all people!"

The next day was Christmas eve, and when Guinever Camelyard paid her usual visit, Fiona with but scant politeness expressed her determination to leave the convent at once. Without manifesting irritation, and with her meek, condescending charm of manner unchanged, the Mother Superior answered:

"Your decision is somewhat sudden. I must ask what has determined you on taking so rash a step? You were brought here by Sister Zita, who next to her love for the true and apostolic Church is renowned for her zeal on behalf of young women, like yourself. She ap-

Digitized by Google

pealed to our Christian charity that we might rescue your soul and consecrate you to the service of our adorable Lord and His Virgin Mother. We have done our best. But this yielding of your higher nature to your lower appals me. What can thus have arrested your spiritual progress? Speak out, child, I demand to know." The voice was wooing, entrancing, and had a man been addressed in such persuasive tones he would have succumbed—and have sacrificed his soul to the enchantress. Fiona, however, was a woman and not so easily beguiled, at least by one of her own sex, hence she only said:

"My reasons, like my conscience, are my own, and I prefer to keep them to myself. But this much I may say, that while others may find their vocation in a convent, I have concluded that mine lies in the world. What need is there for further words? I came freely and I freely go."

"Not so easy, young lady. You talk as a silly child in her tantrums, and you forget who you are and what you are in this house. Santa Zita committed you to our care. When you entered you signed a book promising implicit obedience and submission. You cannot leave this place without her permission, and that I am sure she will not give. You must remain, and without waiting longer for the father confessor you shall begin at once your real novitiate, and begin by learning how to subdue and humble your proud spirit."

"Woman!" exclaimed the now angry Fiona, "I demand my freedom. Try to restrain me and I will bring you to the bar of justice!"

"You threaten, do you?" answered Guinever, still mild and engaging in manner. "Let me tell you that you are already dead to the world; that you might waste away and die here, and clamour never so loudly to be set free, and no one outside would know it, and as for the law, houses like these are beyond it and above it."

"What, in Protestant England!"

Digitized by Google

"Yes, in England, cursed with Nonconformists, but not so far lost to right religious feeling as to dare interpose where the salvation of her daughters are concerned."

"Monstrous!" retorted Fiona. "I do not believe that English gentlemen can ever indirectly be party to the indignities that befall women in such a place as this. Why, what I saw with my own eyes is so brutal as to tax credulity and——"

"So, so, you have been eavesdropping, have you, and have already composed slanders such as have been put in circulation by apostate nuns. Well, you shall now become a sister whether you will or no, and never shall you leave this convent."

"Let me pass, I tell you. I am weary of this wrangle."

Guinever, without a quiver of her firm-set beautiful lips, and with a look of heavenly satisfaction in her face, as though she were anticipating some indescribable delight, touched an electric button, and called: "Sister Cecilia, Sister Hulda, Sister Martha, Theresa, Dorcas, here, at once!"

The women immediately answered the summons, and apparently comprehending what was expected of them, promptly laid hold of Fiona, and notwithstanding her struggles and screams, dragged her to a narrow door through which flowed a chill stream of air from subterranean depths, and pushed her roughly before them down a narrow flight of stairs and then thrust her into a cell. Before she could recover herself, Sister Cecilia, a sinewy, raw-boned woman, with a strident voice, as she shut the prison door called through the grated window: "Submission, complete submission to the Mother Superior! Repent; and when the proof of your penitence comes to us in the sound of the healing discipline we will welcome you into our sacred sisterhood. Submit!"

The cell in which Fiona had been immured was damp and foul smelling, and was supplied with a hard, soiled and wretched pallet. On the wall a hair shirt and a

Digitized by Google

cruel-looking discipline were suspended by a long rusty nail, and on the other side hung a crucifix. The darkness was not so dense but that when the eye had accustomed itself to the gloom these objects could dimly be made out. The poor captive sank despairingly on the cold stone floor, and averted her gaze from these instruments of torture. She wept and prayed, and screamed for help; but help came not either from heaven or earth. Thus the night passed into the day—Christmas Day—and still the hours dragged on, slowly, miserably. A bit of bread and a pitcher of water had been passed, without a word, through a small sliding panel in the lower part of the door, but Fiona revolted from them.

The abstinence from food, the silence, the cold and solitude, numbed and bewildered her, and she began to fear for her reason. Her hair had become loose and had fallen over her shoulders, her dress had become deranged, and her plight was such that the most unfeeling heart, unless beating in the breasts of monastic degenerates, would have been moved to pity. As the Christmas sun was setting Guinever and Cecilia entered the cell. The prisoner took no notice of them, and had only a confused sense of what was taking place. In her mild, saintly way, the Mother Superior said, addressing herself to her companion:

"It is hard for these rebels against the Church to yield, but when they do so they become the most exemplary of her children. Poor child, she will not teach herself voluntary submission. So be it. As a special mark of favour, to-morrow you, Sister Cecilia, shall honour your Lord by teaching her involuntary submission. For the privilege I know you will be grateful, as such a task thoroughly done must add to your crown of rejoicing." Cecilia looked up adoringly, as much as to intimate that if a willing heart and a vigorous hand could increase the sum-total of her merit on earth and her felicity in heaven, neither would be lacking.

Therefore, on the afternoon of the next day, Sister Cecilia entered the dungeon. She approached the captive,

Digitized by Google

who had thrown herself on the pallet, and had to touch her before she seemed aware of her presence.

"The Mother Superior has sent me to receive your submission, but I see you are still impenitent." She glanced at the unused discipline on the wall, and sighed a sigh of satisfaction that the promised possibility of earning additional merit had not escaped her.

"Say to her," replied Fiona, roused from her lethargy, "that she has tortured me beyond the power of endurance, and tell her that I have not submitted and that I would rather die than do so."

"Others have spoken as stoutly as you have, but for the salvation of their soul they have abandoned their own will."

"But I am not of so weak a temper."

"We shall see," Cecilia answered dubiously. "But let me entreat you by what our Lord endured to give yourself up to the sweet will of our dear Mother Superior. Remember that your Lord despised not the cross and scourge for your salvation."

"Sister, I would gladly endure both for His glory and the world's redemption, but not one stripe as light as a feather for my own religious life; for I have no right to save my soul and lose my womanhood."

"Well, then," and the rawboned sister spoke with sanctimonious unction, "if the spirit will not bend it must be broken. Prepare!"

"Prepare! Prepare for what?"

"Prepare! Bare your white back to the waist, kneel before the crucifix, that I who love your soul may do what your piety will not do for you." Cecilia moved with indecent eagerness, as though to assist Fiona in making ready for the scourge, when the incensed girl sprang forward, seized the discipline from the wall, and waving it wildly and furiously round her head, shrieked:

"One step nearer and the lash shall leave its red trail on your cheek. I am desperate and I will strike."

An ejaculation of pain escaped from the inexorable nun as though the whip had already stung her, and

Digitized by Google

having for herself a very wholesome dread of pious flagellations, in her consternation she hastily abandoned the cell. She hurried up the stairs in search of the Mother Superior, and found her in her well-carpeted, well-heated and handsomely furnished reception room, near the landing, conversing with a pallid, angular clergyman.

The two women exchanged glances, and a brief, private, subdued talk between them followed; then Guinever, turning to the priest, remarked:

"It is as I feared. The girl is incorrigible and is in no state of mind to receive you, reverend Father. Leave her with me for three days, and at the end of that time I promise you she shall be all that a novice ought to be in meekness and docility."

She stood before Mitchie Carfrae the incarnation and impersonation of celestial tenderness and seraphic loveliness. He felt like kissing the hem of her garment. She had so charmed him, that in other circumstances he would have surrendered himself to her control and have offered no resistance to her wishes. His urgency, however, was great, and his mission peremptory. From the time when riding with Blair Hamley he had learned of a certain extreme ritualist, the Reverend Marcus Tullius Jumps, who had just settled at the West End, he had determined to follow the advice of Mrs. Quaco, and had concluded that he could represent that exalted but little known ecclesiastic with impunity.

The purchase of a clergyman's garb was a simple matter. A stylish victoria from Woburn Mews was readily hired. The Waterloo Hotel, where he changed his attire, furnished a convenient starting-point, and when, alighting from his carriage, he directed the driver to wait for him, Sister Fridswida, on the strength of his appearance, granted him prompt admission to the Priory. Guinever Camelyard herself was so much taken with the person of the priest that she was not as careful as she might have been in scrutinizing his pretensions. He was so ascetic, so ungainly and melancholy in his make up and bearing that she trusted him from the beginning,

Digitized by Google

and when he gave his name as the Rev. Marcus Tullius Jumps she was entirely thrown off her guard.

"You see, reverend Father," Guinever resumed, "it is as I told you. This Sibilla is very intractable, and it would not be advisable for her to see even you until I have acquainted her myself with the delights of our blessed faith."

Worldly-minded, wicked Mitchie, poor simpleton, had no idea what these words so musically spoken foretokened. He answered courteously: "I am sure, daughter, that in your hands," and he contemplated with admiration their whiteness and tapering fingers, "she can only receive the sweetest benefits. But for the present she must hear from her dying mother and accompany me to her bedside."

"But, Father Jumps, that is impossible. The girl's salvation is of more importance than heretical words from a Presbyterian parent. You yourself know that the divine purpose of this Convent of Enclosed Nuns is the emancipation of our affections from all human ties. Here we are dead to the sentimental weakness for intercourse with kindred. Return to the mother of the girl and tell her that Sibilla rises above all earthly considerations and does not care to see her mother before she dies."

If Guinever had been discoursing on roses and sunbeams she could not have been more self-possessed and rapturously saintly than she was when directing the clergyman explicitly to misrepresent her ward. Mitchie was taken quite aback by this proposed shuffling and simulation. He had never himself been a martyr to the truth, indeed, he had often fallen from it, but this was a new phase of depravity to him,—this woman, so superior and apparently so benign, vowed to all kinds of virtuous and ennobling ideals, without a flutter or a blush, sending him out to tell an inhuman lie. Earnestly he remonstrated: "But how can I say what you would have me say when I have not seen Sibilla? It would be an untruth."

Digitized by Google

"What! are you so poorly instructed in the Catholic faith as not to know that a lie ceases to be a lie when it is uttered in the interests of the Church?"

It was at this point, when Mitchie was gathering courage to be more vehement in his protestations, that the excited Sister Cecilia broke in upon their tête-à-tête, and the Mother Superior insisted that the recalcitrant girl be left entirely to her saving mercies. To this her visitor again strenuously objected. Moreover, while he did not understand the dumb show going on between Guinever and Cecilia, he was sharp enough to see that trouble existed somewhere, and was not slow to connect Fiona with it. He was groping in the dark, but he was suddenly enlightened, and in a way that brought the interview to a crisis. The terrified nun in her haste to escape the fury of the captive had not taken care to draw the bolt of the prison door, and now the captive herself appeared on the scene, swinging the discipline like a crazy woman. Immediately Guinever, unperturbed and dignified, moved into the hall to intercept her progress. The others followed. Fiona exclaimed:

"Out of the way there. I demand to leave this fearful place. Out of my way there!"

"Hush, daughter, don't rave in this manner. No one would harm you. We are all your friends. You see, Father Jumps, for yourself how unfitted this poor child is to go with you."

Fiona's eyes rested on Mitchie. She did not know him. Only once before had she seen him, at Miss Twyzer's, and then she barely noticed him. His disguise, also, was so complete, and suited him so well, that it would not have been easy for his acquaintances to recognize him. She viewed him searchingly and detecting, as she thought, the priest of God in his sallow complexion, his heavy features, and his professional habiliments, she turned to him imploringly:

"You, sir, are a clergyman, and a defenceless girl should find in you a friend. I entreat you to take me away from this terrible place, this place forsaken by pity,

Digitized by Google

this place which suppresses the noblest instincts of humanity for the sake of salvation!"

"Call the sisters, Cecilia," interposed Guinever, for the first time betraying symptoms of anger, "and let them remove her to her cell, and I'll bring her to reason and submission before the night is old."

As she spoke the alarm was given and the nuns began to gather, but to her amazement and theirs the Reverend Marcus Tullius Jumps stepped across the hall to the side of Fiona, and taking her hand in his, replied:

"Enough, daughter, you shall not remain here. Come!" Quick as a flash the Mother Superior barred their passage to the great door leading from the hall to the grounds beyond. All of her suavity and sweetness had fled and she stood before them like a splendid animal at bay.

"False, apostate priest," she cried, "this is sacrilege! Would you tear from the altar the virgin who has fled to Christ for refuge? Shame on you. Have you no fear of the anathema maranatha?"

"Oh, bother! Rubbish! We're going to get out of this place quick. See?" answered the Reverend Marcus Tullius in very unclerical style.

"Hasten for the gardeners! Rouse the neighbourhood! This outrage shall not be perpetrated!" screeched Guinever Camelyard.

"Ah, does it mean violence?" shouted Mitchie in return, and he wrenched the discipline from Fiona's hand, put his left arm round her to support her—and he did so in a very worldly kind of way,—"If any man comes between us and the gate I'll brain him."

The bells rang, the nuns ran to and fro, in an extremity of fear, thumping into each other and bawling, "Murder, murder," while Guinever clutched at Fiona and tried to drag her away. The girl fought her off, but was nigh unto swooning. Mitchie lifted her in his arms, and whirling the terrible discipline made a way for himself and his burden to the garden entrance. "Open the gate, open the gate!" he commanded, and aged Fridswida, who had

Digitized by Google

spent many tedious years in that service, hastened as fast as her trembling limbs would allow to obey.

Then came the shrill counter cry: "Close the gate, close the gate!" but before the portress could do so she was upset by Mitchie in his hurried flight. This gave rise to a fresh outbreak of noise and screaming. Fridswida howled: "I'm killed, I'm dead!" and the sisters who had now reached the garden, echoed hysterically her cry. At the same time the gardener and his assistant arrived. They both rushed on Mitchie, while he, still holding to his charge, slashed them mercilessly across the face. Smarting and blinded with pain, they reeled back, and the hero was on the threshold of the open gate. Even then his way was impeded. A small crowd attracted by the clamour and the turmoil had gathered round the entrance. One man shouted: "He is running off with a nun!" Another: "And he a priest! Shame, shame!" The acts of the people as well as their words were far from friendly, and Mitchie paused irresolute. In this emergency assistance arrived in the person of an elegantly attired young man, who had been for some time watching the convent walls.

He saw the hatless clergyman striving to bear a fainting woman, whose dress was torn and whose hair was dishevelled, through a hostile crowd to a waiting carriage, and moved by the chivalry of his years, he unceremoniously hustled men and women aside and opened a path for the fugitives. "Lift her into the carriage," Mitchie directed, as he kept back his assailants, and the stranger obeyed. The gardeners made another attempt to lay hold of him, but he dashed his clenched fist in the face of one, tripped up the other, and jumped into the victoria. So excited was he that he failed to thank his valiant and unknown ally, but shouted to the coachman: "Squirries Street." The gentleman closed the carriage. As he loosened his hold of the coach door and the conveyance began to move, the fictitious priest lifted the girl's hair from her face, and the Red Comyn exclaimed:

"By heavens! Fiona herself!"

Digitized by Google

Without hesitancy he pushed his way through the groups of curious people, hailed a hansom, entered without delay and ordered: "Keep yonder victoria in sight if possible, and make for Squirries Street."

When alone with his charge Mitchie became quite anxious as she gave no signs of returning consciousness. He held her in his arms, he talked to her, he patted her pale cheek—but he did not kiss her. He could have done so, but he dared not do it. She was sacred to him. Never had he felt towards woman as he did towards her. His own deed, though not generous in its origin, had already commenced to regenerate his nature. What now should he do with the girl? Could he in any way take advantage of her innocence? He did not understand himself. He was full of strange doubts, and in his perplexity he was glad when the carriage came to a halt. He was, however, nonplussed when he saw barring his way to the cottage, a shabby hearse with great black nags and two rickety funeral coaches; and as he was debating how he should act, a hansom cab drove up alongside and in a second the Duke of Kincardine was standing by the door of the victoria.

"Thanks to you, reverend sir, for your noble conduct. I always have respected the clergy. But you, sir, you have won my admiration and my gratitude. You are a hero! Let me assist you."

"The Duke of Kincardine!" answered Mitchie in blank amazement.

"Ah, you know me? Well, no matter. You have rescued my future wife and I shall never be able to repay you. But her condition is dangerous and we must carry her into the house."

"Yet, how can we do that when a funeral is in progress?"

"I will assume the responsibility. The Rev. Blair Hamley told me he had a funeral at the cottage, and was to join me afterwards at the Convent, where he had hoped to do by the Bishop's authority what you single-handed accomplished without it. May I ask your name?"

Digitized by Google

"I prefer not to give it, your Grace." Indeed, poor Mitchie had fallen into one of his dogged moods and was not disposed to be communicative. He realized the fruitlessness of his schemes. This peer would deprive him of all he had struggled so hard to obtain. The game had been played and he had lost again. It was too late now to retrieve his fortune. Things must take their course. And they did. The Duke, as his right, and without asking permission, grasped Fiona in his arms and bore her into the cottage. As he carried her the fresh air revived her and her lips murmured—"Comyn"—and though as yet she had not recognized him, love's instinct prompted her to nestle closer to his heart, as the wet storm-frightened bird buries itself down deeper in the nest. The party crossed the threshold, and Fiona was carefully borne to a couch in the little room where Shane's mother-in-law died, and from which the solemnities proceeding in the parlour could be witnessed. Blair Hamley's deep-toned voice was heard, saying:

"We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Mitchie Carfrae turned pale and was for the moment transfixed, for from the doorway he saw the face of his dead sister, white, placid—almost smiling. She lay before him in her cheap white dress, in a common deal coffin, with her bloodless fingers clasped over her shrunken bosom. He had not heard of her death, as he had been unable to return to Lancaster Gate, and it was all a horrible mystery to him, her death and the presence of her body here—beneath this roof. The voice again sounded:

"For man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in vain: he heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them!"

Mitchie continued to gaze. He recognized Laissina Quaco in a poor black gown and black cotton gloves, sitting at the head of the coffin, her face half covered with a scant crepe veil. One other mourner was visible,

Digitized by Google

Dick Gowanlock. The old Sergeant erect, his cheeks wet with tears, stood, prayer-book in hand, and wishing in his own quaint way for a sprig of cassia to lay upon the coffin. Foyle Shane sat apart as a matter of respect, holding Lena on his knee. Ah! it was pitiful that the young, the innocent, the harmless, had so few to grieve. The voice once more sounded:

"As soon as thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep, and fade away suddenly like the grass. In the morning it is green and groweth up; but in the evening it is cut down, dried up and withered!"

Mitchie Carfrae slowly entered the room, took a vacant chair next to Mrs. Quaco and bowed his head. He himself did not comprehend what had come over him. Unknown to himself, the repugnance he had felt for the image of his heartless father, the service he had rendered to one innocent girl, whose presence had kindled in him a new and strange respect for womanhood, and now the sight of this pure dead maiden, his sister, the victim of iniquities not her own, had shocked the latent good of his nature into activity, and had exposed the paltriness of his ignoble ambitions and the foulness of his pleasures. He never could be his old self again. The old Mitchie, if not quite dead, was mortally wounded—and he knew it not. He sat motionless, and the minister continued:

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write. From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours."

Prayers followed and the preparations for the removal of the body. When Blair Hamley had ended the service he was surprised to see a clergyman sitting next to Mrs. Quaco, and was about to address him, when the Duke, who had entered the room, prevented the courteous inquiry that had risen to his lips, by informing him that their mission had been superseded by this minister whose name he had not learned. While they talked apart, Mrs. Quaco, who had easily recognized Carfrae, and who in her sorrow had not noticed his disguise, said:

Digitized by Google

"Mitchie, thank you for coming. It was good in you, and if we never meet again, I shall always think kindly of you."

"What do you mean to do, Laissina?"

"I can't answer now. I'm a poor wicked creature—God forgive me!—but after this I shall do right whether it's respectable or not."

The Duke now drew near with Blair Hamley. "May I have the honour of introducing you—the Reverend——?"

"I am no reverend," quickly responded Carfrae. "I am a cheat, a fraud, a humbug. I don't wish to talk. Yonder dead girl was my sister, and I must follow the remains to the grave. For my own reasons I decided to rescue the other. Don't ask me why. It's done, and that's all there's to it. The young lady doesn't know who I am. But you do, your Grace, if you will deign to recollect. I am Mitchie Carfrae, Mr. Pinchover's head clerk." Stammeringly he added: "That's all."

"All!" exclaimed Comyn. "All! Whoever you are, you are a brave man, and a hero, and as modest as you're brave."

Further commendations and congratulations were arrested by the departure of the modest funeral cortège. The Duke remained with Fiona. Perhaps she was too weak to be left; perhaps the Duke did not care to leave her so soon. They straightway plunged into mutual confidences, and when she related to him the real cause of her leaving home and how she could not consent to place the bar sinister on his escutcheon, he hugged her unmercifully, and then astounded her by relating all that Zinnia had told him, only omitting reference to Rowallan's connection with Jorge Avecomus. He added farther:

"Whatever fault there was it was not your mother's. If he was guilty, she was not. But I am not clear that it has ever been proven, blameworthy though he may have been, that he was ever legally married to another. Be that as it may, there is no hindrance, Miss Fiona

Digitized by Google

Rowallan, to your becoming the Duchess of Kincardine."

He now insisted on her immediate return to Hackney Common, and encouraged by what he had said, she consented. He insisted that promptness was necessary, as he had promised the richest man in the world, now dwelling in his town house, to bring her mother and herself to see him, though with what object in view he could not divine.

It is hardly worth while to record how the prodigal returned, how joyously she was received, how the Duke availed himself of the auspicious occasion to claim from Zinnia his sweetheart for his bride. Neither is it important to mention that Fiona blushed and said his Grace ought to ask her first, or that the mother gladdened both their hearts by not withholding her blessing. That night, when the happy lover had left them to themselves, promising to use his diligence to find the wandering Youtsay, two women bowed in prayer, and they prayed for Mitchie Carfrae, the hero, who had ventured all to save a lone girl, with no thought of reward, and for the noble son and lover who had come into their lives, and for the loyal but weak old battered seaman who was somewhere a derelict on the world's stormy sea.

That same night, after the modest funeral service, a woman in mourning, near the top of Whitechapel parted from a cadaverous man dressed as a clergyman, who fidgeted as though anxious to escape observation.

"Where are you going, Laissina Quaco?" he asked.

"Never you mind, Mitchie Carfrae. Not back to Rowallan's. No. I'm tired of being respectable, and I wants to be good. Says I to myself, says I, 'it won't do, Laissina Quaco, you've broken your heart,' says I, 'being respectable,' an' now, as my angel Tina says, 'Be good, mother, and meet me in heaven'—and I'm going to." As she spoke she looked sharply at her companion, for heretofore he had only derided her endeavours to reform. But Mitchie was in no mocking mood. He replied: "Success go with you. I'm feeling a bit queer

Digitized by Google

myself." In a sheepish way, and as though he were planning a burglary, he added: "I'm through with Charmartan's and Leicester Square, and think I shall keep myself to business, and—and—good-bye, Laissina."

With a few other friendly words they parted. Mrs. Quaco walked rapidly a short distance down Whitechapel, and then accosted a flashy shop-girl.

"Can you show me where Salvation Army Headquarters are?"

"Gawd, ye want them pious blokes, do yer? Well, keep on till ye see a light and hear a drum on Fieldgate Street. That's them—Salvation Harmy and religion 'ot, werry 'ot. My!"

Digitized by Google

XXX

HIDDEN THINGS OF DARKNESS BROUGHT TO LIGHT

FOYLE SHANE was not a desperado. No magistrate had ever charged a jury in his case, though both in London and in Melbourne he had more than once been under police surveillance. But he was a gifted man. His fingers were deft and pliant, and came and went about the persons of other people with astounding dexterity. They pilfered without respect to age, rank or relationship, and he had blushed to discover them emptying the pocket of his own child.

He had been born with this special talent, therefore he had never been conscious of moral obliquity in its use. Shall the lark be censured because he sings? or the fox because he feasts on the tempting fowl? or the cat because she stealthily sips the precious cream? The genius of man must express itself in art, music or commerce, and why should he be blamed for exercising any natural aptitude? While he did not believe in much, either scientific or religious, he was strong on heredity. That he was convinced could not be gainsaid.

His father, Tim Shane, had been a man of burglarious proclivities, the indulgence in which had landed him in Botany Bay, and even the severities of that penal settlement were not sufficient to suppress their activities. For, while Tim Shane would never have broken into that settlement, he broke out of it, and was heard of later in the Bargo-brush "bailing" up horsemen and teams, and in the Eugowra range on the Sidney side of the Lachlan gold fields, attacking the gold escort and relieving it of £100,000 of treasure. Tim's wife, Pudge Foyle, had also

Digitized by Google

been a convict, and thus from both sides the son had inherited his phenomenal endowment.

An unappreciative world was arrayed against its due enjoyment, and might carry its persecution so far as to involve him in trouble, trouble nasty and inconvenient. Therefore, he was anxious to get out of England, where the prejudice against men of his stamp was more intense than in the freer colonial lands, and where it was more disagreeably effective. With this end in view, on the morning of the second day after Christmas, in accordance with his promise to Pitsligo, in company with Ichabod, who was anxious to squeeze something out of the millionaire in this way if in no other—for the Jew had been grievously disappointed at the delay in the fulfillment of Mitchie Carfrae's plans and promises—Foyle Shane set out for the Kincardine mansion.

Pitsligo was expecting both the Irishman and the Hebrew, but before they arrived and at an unusually early hour, Sergeant Dick announced: "the Duke of Kincardine, the Rev. Blair Hamley and two ladies to see your honour, and his lordship would be pleased if you would see him first of all alone."

"Certainly. Ask Miss Rowallan to meet the ladies and the clergyman for me, and tell the Duke I will join him at once in the study."

The two men entered the great library by different doors at the same moment, and with a few words of greeting, the Red Comyn plunged into the subject that had brought him hither.

"You commissioned me, if possible, through the clergyman whom Orlop had sheltered to ascertain the whereabouts of a young woman——"

"Ah, have you found her?"

"Yes, it turned out that the minister was Blair Hamley, an Oxford chum, and when I spoke to him about the lady in question he expressed his interest in her well-being, and ascertained for me from one Santa Zita that she had immured herself in a convent. It at once became a serious question whether we could obtain

Digitized by Google

access to her, and whether if we did she would be permitted to leave even though she might wish to do so. But while we were making ready to demand an interview, the young lady was set free by the daring of an intrepid youth, who had heard of her incarceration from a Mrs. Quaco, and for no conceivable reason except the love of doing a noble deed. His name is Mitchie Carfrae."

"Mitchie Carfrae, Mitchie Carfrae," repeated Tysford absent-mindedly. "Can it be a relative? Ah me, how impossible it is to get away from the past."

"The clergyman and myself," resumed the Duke, "were soon able to obtain an audience, not only with the young lady herself, but with her mother. And this is our report: The young lady, for the sake of hiding her identity, the result, I may say, of a misapprehension on her part, assumed the name of her grandmother, long since dead, Sibilla Macgillivray. Her mother's maiden name was Zinnia Macgillivray, she married the Master of Rowallan, and he is therefore the father of the girl. We found out, farther, that her mother, supposing Rowallan false or dead, or both, married Orlop Youtsay, and for her peace of mind withheld from the daughter the true story of her birth. Hence, she has been known as Fiona Youtsay, my Fiona, who so strangely disappeared, but who is now happily recovered, and I have the honour to announce will soon be the Duchess of Kincardine."

His lordship in making his report had not observed the effect of his words on Pitsligo, and he did not, until the venerable man, trembling in every nerve and gasping for breath, clutched him by the sleeve, and falteringly inquired:

"You are not deceiving me?"

"You forget, Mr. Tysford, to whom you speak."

"Oh, forgive me, forgive me, your Grace," the old man replied in a piteous way, "but what am I to believe? Why, Rowallan has presented another girl as his daughter—Tina."

"Mr. Tysford, I have heard of that. But this much I

Digitized by Google

know, that unfortunate young woman was not related to the Macgillivrays, and she has been removed from all contentions—she is dead."

"Dead! Great God! Why, I saw her on Christmas eve, and no one has told me, and Angelica has said nothing."

"Yes, she passed away early on Christmas morning, and was taken to the cemetery last night."

Pitsligo groaned and tottered about the room as if smitten by an unparalleled calamity, muttering to himself: "As I expected, deceived, deceived, always deceived—poor child, wretched child," and then coming to a sudden halt he exclaimed, "But it's wonderful, wonderful—the trick found out, in spite of them found out. What am I thinking of! and there are my own to whom justice must be done." With increasing excitement, quite ignoring the fact that he was addressing a peer of the realm he cried out nervously: "Hasten, man, hasten, can't you see that I am dying to have you bring them here? Quick, quick!"

Though not accustomed to being peremptorily ordered about, and having not the least comprehension of the real source of Pitsligo's agitation, his lordship stood not on his dignity, and in a few seconds returned with the ladies, followed by Blair Hamley and Angelica, whose manner towards each other was distant in the extreme. When the party entered the library they found Pitsligo talking vehemently to himself, violently rubbing his hands and tramping restlessly up and down the room. As soon as he saw the party he turned sharply about, and made for Zinnia, and to the utter dismay of that eminently proper woman and of the spectators, clasped her round the neck and despite her screams began to kiss her, between each fervid salutation exclaiming: "Who would have thought it, after so many years! O Zinnia, Zinnia, my own Zinnia!"

The object of these affectionate demonstrations struggled frantically and angrily to extricate herself, but he would not let her go, until seized with another thought

Digitized by Google

he released her and threw his arms round the astonished Fiona. He fondled her, kissed her cheek, her hair, her lips, and laughed hilariously. Had he gone mad? The Duke was scandalized; Hamley was amused; but Angelica, who was acquainted with Tysford's identity, and who, as soon as the name was mentioned, recognized Zinnia in Mrs. Youtsay, understood the real state of affairs and relieved the strain by inquiring with great earnestness:

"Why, Zinnia, don't you know any of us? Have you forgotten Angelica, and can you not recognize your own brother Dawney?"

Then it was Zinnia's turn to lose her head and act in an eccentric and extravagant fashion. Overwhelmed by a frenzy of emotion, she pushed her daughter aside and clasped Pitsligo to her bosom, and lapsing into her almost forgotten Scotch, she cried: "Eh, Dawney, Dawney, brither mine, an' is it yersel at last? An' we thocht ye dead at the bottom of the sea. Hech, Dawney, how our mither grieved for ye, mon, an' ye wadna send a word, only a word, Dawney." She laid her tear-stained face on his shoulder and sobbed for the memories of the auld lang syne. As they thus stood, folded in each other's arms, Angelica explained to the Duke and Fiona the circumstances of Dawney's history, and supplemented what they both had heard from Zinnia of her daughter's parentage. Then realizing that she had never met her niece before, she too felt called on to express her love: "Why, I, as well as your uncle, must embrace you, Fiona, for, if you are Powrie's child, I am your aunt."

Zinnia, anxious for Orlop, was about to inform her brother of his disappearance, when she was interrupted by sounds of altercation in the lower hall and by Dick's voice expostulating:

"I tell you, Nancy, Mr. Tysford is busy and you mustn't intrude—and I won't let you see him anyway."

This was the first time that the doughty warrior had been known to assert his marital authority, and his better

Digitized by Google

half was thoroughly incensed. She had delayed pushing her claims in the hope of cooperation from Mitchie, but this very morning when she had addressed him on the subject, he had answered waspishly, and declared that he washed his hands of the foolish business.

This rebuff, this "going back on her" as she phrased it, had inflamed her righteous wrath, and she had abandoned herself to frequent potations of gin and to the soothing satisfaction of scolding and shaking Jamie Jenks. Madam Thesperius was impelled by her sympathetic nature to ascertain what had gone wrong, and when she had heard how rudely and brutally Carfrae had treated the landlady, and had herself imbibed a friendly glass of port, she rose to the level of the great occasion, and suggested that Mrs. Gowanlock should go at once and claim Tysford as her long-lost uncle, and if he denied the relationship boldly demand from him an account of the missing relative.

Thanks to what Carfrae had gleaned from Ichabod, and the ease with which the Hebrew could be produced as a witness, the women could make out a plausible case, and one that would, for the sake of avoiding trouble and publicity, very likely yield them considerable cash. They therefore braced themselves for their arduous undertaking by several additional glasses, and were not to be put aside either by the remonstrances of Dick or of Calmay, when they demanded to be introduced into the presence of their master. Mrs. Gowanlock, redolent of gin, glaring through her spectacles, and grasping her cotton umbrella, thrust the "menials," as she called them, from her path, and entering the library singled out the oldest man and mumbled:

"It is he, it must be he. I would have known him by the family likeness." Then louder, and with the rising inflection: "My long-lost uncle. Madam Thesperius, hold my umbrella —— Ah, my uncle, my uncle!"

Without warning, and before her helpless victim could prepare himself for what was coming, she swooped down on Pitsligo, where he was sitting, hugged him in the

Digitized by Google

most uncompromising and flagrant style, still repeating: "My uncle, my uncle, I have found you at last!" The scene was ludicrous enough. She enthusiastic and overwhelming in her demonstrations; Pitsligo irritated, shamed, and striving to be free; Angelica amazed at her audacity and boldness; Zinnia laying hold of her brother to deliver him from the violent enchantress; Thalia waving the umbrella high in air and delivering an inappropriate passage from Shakespeare; Dick indulging in no end of startling ejaculations; while the Duke and Fiona, sympathizing with Pitsligo, stood apart laughing at the absurdity of the situation. Nancy actually flopped on Tysford's knee, pinioning him more securely, as she rambled on expressing the joy she then experienced in welcoming home the dear uncle, long lost, but found again. Pitsligo's patience had reached its limit. Most ungallantly and vigorously he pushed her from him and drew his limbs from under her with the result that she fell sprawling on the floor.

The clergyman went to her and assisted her to rise, expostulated with her on her unseemly conduct and assured her that she had fallen into a grievous error.

"But," she answered, tartly, "is he not a Scotchman, and did he not sail on the *Jack Cade* in 1852?"

"Really, I cannot tell," Blair Hamley replied.

"Deny it if you dare, and because you're rich refuse to own your poor relations who have seen better days, but you must be and you are my uncle. I asked Mr. Odlum, who has the old passenger list and he tells me only one Tysford sailed on the *Cade*, and as my uncle wrote my mother that he was going on that ship—you must be he, and I am a much abused woman. These people here are cajoling you for what they can get out of you, and you deny yourself to my disinterested love."

"My good woman," said Pitsligo, with marked solemnity, "there are things in every life, not necessarily wrong, which the public has no right to know, and which the individual may not care to divulge. Let it suffice, for it is all you have any right to know, I am not your uncle."

Digitized by Google

"Then," Nancy retorted, "where is he? What became of him? Only one of his name sailed on the *Jack Cade*. You must have stolen his name, and who knows but that you may have taken his ——"

"Why, what do you mean?" the men in the room almost simultaneously inquired.

"I mean," and Nancy had now reached the stage in which the gin had ceased to stimulate and had developed a spirit of ugly doggedness, "that here is a man who took my uncle's name, and what more likely than that, for the sake of his money, he may have taken his life. I am determined that the law shall make you tell what you did with him, and I have a witness who will prove that you are responsible for his disappearance."

"A witness? And who on earth may he be?" asked the Duke. As he spoke Calmay announced:

"Mr. Foyle Shane and Mr. Ichabod Raphiel have called and say that they have an appointment with Mr. Tysford."

"The man himself!" exclaimed Mrs. Gowanlock.

"What! Shane?" queried the Duke.

"No, Ichabod."

"Then show him and his companion up."

The Duke had taken the direction of affairs in his own hands. Innocent or guilty, he could not fail to perceive that the woman's assertions had prostrated Pitsligo. Indeed, the accused felt crushed, lonely and despised, and as he thought he saw an expression of misgiving on the face of Zinnia, and of distrusting anxiety in that of Angelica, he inwardly cursed his money, longed for the peace of the friendly wilderness, and again repeated to himself, "how impossible to get away from the past."

Shane and the Jew were shown in by the footman, bowing and apologizing, for they had no expectation of meeting so many people, and they were polite enough to propose coming at a more convenient hour. But the Duke cut their proposals short, saying:

"You have business, gentlemen, with Mr. Tysford."

Before they could reply, Mrs. Gowanlock, notwith-

Digitized by Google

standing the urgent remonstances of Dick, broke in impetuously: "Mr. Raphiel, I want you to repeat here what you have said about this Mr. Tysford." The Jew was startled, bit his long moustache and was silent. "Did you not say that this man's name was not Tysford, and that he had emigrated on a dead man's ticket, and that the real owner of the ticket had been murdered in Tiger Bay, and that only one person knew what had become of the true Tysford and that was the false one?"

"I didn't shay that he murders him," replied the Jew, hanging his head, shuffling his feet restlessly, and fingering the skirt of his long coat—"but I protests—protests ——"

"So do I," and Pitsligo, who spoke, tried to rise from his chair, but his strength failed him. He sank back into his seat, his hair, which had been of late neglected, straggling over his clammy forehead, and his entire appearance indicating either the keenest remorse or the most poignant humiliation. "I protest against the falsehoods of these people. Miss Rowallan knows why I left my home in 1852, and, if she will, can testify to my integrity. When in London I bought of this Jew the emigrant ticket which had been issued to one Pitsligo Tysford, and he informed me that he had purchased it of the original owner."

The Jew having fortified himself with the hope of at last squeezing money out of Pitsligo, sullenly answered: "S'helps me Gods, if ven I saws him he didn't rush for my shops with hish hands reds vid bloods and hish face bleedings. He vas trying to escapes."

"And you think this blood," interrupted the Duke with unmistakable seriousness, "was ——"

Before his Grace could finish the Hebrew resumed: "There vas a mans murdered in Tigers Bay at that times, who had a tickets to Australia. And t'others man vat tooks that tickets and gets rich, so rich, vill not expects that we believes the murdered man gives him that tickets vid hish compliments. That's all."

"Ichabod, that is not all; you know more than that!"

Digitized by Google

The speaker was Blair Hamley, who with the traces of the fierce trial through which he had passed upon him, and even unusually grave for him, as he stepped forward, was not unlike a glorious Daniel come to judgment. "Yes, you know more, and by the patience of these friends, I will quicken your memory."

"For God's sake, say on, Hamley," the Duke responded for the entire company, though not one present could surmise what knowledge he had of events enacted so long before his birth.

"I know what it is to be condemned unheard——" a reproachful glance in the direction of Angelica:—"and I am, therefore, the more anxious to rescue Mr. Tysford from these unjust aspersions, even though in so doing I may seem to violate the secrets of the confessional. I ought to say, also, that I have no claims upon Mr. Tysford and he has none on me, and that, strange as it may seem, I have never been introduced to him, and have never seen him until to-day."

"Never mind, Hamley, we will attend to the formalities by and by. Relieve our anxiety. Address yourself to the main purport of your speech."

"Three things are known to Shane: that his wife before he went to Australia betrayed symptoms of a failing mind; that his mother-in-law was wretched to the end of her days, and entertained a mortal antipathy for the Jew he has brought here; and that she confessed to me before she died."

"I brought Raphiel here by the request of Mr. Tysford," replied Shane impatiently, "and I am not going to have you insinuate that I'm mixed up with him or his charges."

"I shall never forget the hour when the poor soul related to me the story of her life. As a girl she had kept company with Tim Shane, Foyle's father. Nora, for that was her name, like some other young women, with no evil intent, went somewhat too freely into gay resorts. She would venture with Tim into cheap theatres, concert halls and the public house. In 1852

Digitized by Google

there came into the neighbourhood where she lived a young Scotchman who let everybody know that he was called Pitsligo Tysford, and was on his way to the gold fields in the Macquarie Valley discovered the year before by Edward Hargraves. He was a reckless roysterer, and taking a fancy to Nora one night when in liquor went too far in his graceless speech, and Tim Shane, who had also been carousing, felled him to the ground, and a handy weapon of some sort did the rest. There were two witnesses to the deed—and one was Ichabod Raphiel."

The Jew turned livid, and stammered, "It's a lies—a lies——"

"Hush, old man. Remember the dead is talking by the lips of the living. Let me proceed. All the little property of the murdered man went to the Hebrew as the price of his silence, and from that moment Tim and Nora were at his mercy. Tim was never himself after that. He grew desperate, committed robberies, was transported, married in Australia, and after his wife's death, returned to England bringing with him his son, and was afterwards killed in a midnight brawl."

"I objects, I objects," whined the Hebrew, "to these base shlanders." Without noticing him Hamley proceeded:

"The tragedy was committed in a narrow lane not far from a public house kept by Fergus O'Flaherty—the other witness, who being a countryman and having himself a sneaking kindness for Nora, and not caring to have the authorities investigate his place, consented to aid Tim in secreting the body. The girl was sent home and was never told by either of the men what disposition they had made of the remains. But the Jew knew." Again Ichabod tried to interrupt the story, but the Duke shouted at him:

"Be quiet, I tell you, or I will adjourn this meeting to Bow Street."

"It seems that Fergus had been intrusted with the renting of an old house on Squirries Street that belonged to a distant relative. As it was surrounded by a

Digitized by Google

wall enclosing a yard, it afforded a convenient burial-place. Evading the vigilance of the police they laid the dead man there. In due course of time, as Tim was in penal servitude, Fergus wooed and won Nora, and falling heir to the cottage took his wife there, and there Nora's daughter, Kathleen, was born. After a few years of wedded life Fergus died, and then the real trouble of his wife began, for the Jew appeared upon the scene. He recalled the tragedy of 1852, and then told her that the dead man's body was interred in the northeast corner of her house lot, and threatened her with exposure unless she mortgaged her property to him. The woman's life became a living terror!"

"Shame, shame!" broke involuntarily from the lips of the little company.

"Listen, there is more. Foyle Shane, who had been deprived of his parents grew up as best he could, and persuaded Kathleen to be his wife, and after awhile urged her to emigrate with him to Australia. For weeks she would not be persuaded, when, to his surprise, suddenly her objections gave way and she insisted on setting out at once. Shane to this day does not know what changed her mind, and neither does he know why she has been so depressed and timorous since their return to Ivernia Cottage."

"Right you are, parson," responded Shane, whose interest in the narrative had perceptibly deepened.

"The evening before Kathleen gave her consent to leave England she observed in the early moonlight a large black cat prowling round a spot in the northeast corner of the yard. The creature scratched the ground, and his eyes blazed with greenish light, as he snarled and growled. Though terrified, Kathleen could not resist the impulse to slip out at the back door and approach the place. Judge of her horror when she discovered that through the partial subsidence of the soil a human skull had been uncovered. The eyeless sockets were turned towards her, and the fleshless lips seemed to plead with her for burial."

Digitized by Google

"My poor uncle, my poor uncle!" wailed the genuinely stricken Gowanlock. Thalia clasped her hands frantically round the cotton umbrella, and turned the whites of her eyes heavenward, that the spectators might learn from this performance the intensity of her tragic horror; the Duke stood erect, his noble features expressing indignation, while his arm supported Fiona, and Pitsligo sat, silent, looking into space.

"Appalled by the discovery," Hamley continued, "Kathleen fled to her mother, and then for the first time learned all about the violent deed of 1852. The two women returned to the yard and reinterred the skull. From that hour Kathleen has never been herself, and shrinks with loathing from Ivernia Cottage. And now, Madame," turning to Nancy, "if this unfortunate man was your uncle, you now know that he died in a drunken brawl, that this Hebrew witness of yours possessed himself of his effects and sold the passage ticket to this gentleman, whose only fault, if fault it may be called, is that having entered Australia in the dead man's name he has continued to use it in preference to his own."

Here Pitsligo interposed. His manner was subdued, solemn, as of one who would never smile again, and his voice was muffled as he spoke: "If in so doing I've in any way unintentionally wronged this lady, I'm ready to make reparation."

"Not a penny," rejoined Hamley promptly, "for, if I can judge the ethics of the case you do not owe her a stiver. What you may do of your bounty you alone can decide, but as to indebtedness, there is none. The Jew is in a far more reprehensible position than the woman. He has traded on a crime, he has kept the dead from Christian burial, and has tortured the living. He should be handed over to justice, or make what compensation he can to those whom he has wronged—Mrs. Gowanlock and Mrs. Shane."

The Jew quaked at the thought of exposing his career before the magistrates; and what he dreaded the Duke did not desire, for such inquiries would bring them all

Digitized by Google

before the public and might prove too great a strain for Tysford's sensitive nature to endure. Before he could express himself, however, the Australian gave his own decision.

"I'm in favour of immediately summoning the police unless the Hebrew will pass over to Shane every paper he has against Ivernia Cottage and will clear the title of every cloud. The cottage I intend to purchase from Shane, the money to go to him and the property to Miss Rowallan for a young woman's home. As for Mrs. Gowanlock, for her husband's sake, and as an equivalent for the use of her uncle's name, I will place in the hands of the Duke an amount sufficient to keep her the rest of her days in modest independence. What say you, Jew? Will you to Bow Street or Clerkenwell, or will you compromise, and in a way that costs you nothing?"

Ichabod's fingers twisted and writhed as though they craved something or some one to squeeze. He was wet with perspiration, and he shivered as though he had been summoned to the scaffold.

"I accepts your terms," was the only answer he deigned to make, but as he tottered through the door he was heard to mutter to himself: "Squeeze! Squeeze! and I had hoped to squeeze."

"Go after him, Shane," added Pitsligo, "and bring this business to a close, that for your wife's sake and for Lena's sake you may get out of England as soon as possible. And what say you, Mrs. Gowanlock, to what I have proposed?"

Mrs. Gowanlock did not feel amiable. She was glum and craved a drop of gin to brace her up. She turned sharply on Pitsligo and answered:

"I'm not satisfied. I owe something to my dead uncle. He's been wronged. I'm not to be deceived, and I will—I will—I don't know what—but I will," and she began to weep.

"Very well, Madame, go your way and do as you please. Will your Grace let Calmay assist this lady to find her way to the street?"

Digitized by Google

"But I don't think I would leave in this way, Mrs. Gowanlock," Thalia ventured to suggest. "You are troubled about the corpse and no Christian burial, but we can trust the clergyman to manage that. It doesn't seem to me you can prove anything, and why not solace yourself with——"

"With the gold cure," unsympathetic Sergeant Dick added.

"Wretch, wretch," was the savage retort, "you are all mercenary—and you, too, Dick, and you'll fawn on that old man for what you can get out of him." Pitsligo winced and in spite of himself looked round distrustfully.

"And you suppose I can be bribed," the unreasonable virago continued, "and that the niece of the murdered man will accept blood-money. I'm not to be bought! My soul is not corrupted by cash, thank God! And if I accept this ample—ample—understand me, ample provision for life, I consent to receive it as a tribute to my unpurchasable virtue and my disregard of gain!" With these words of heroic disinterestedness Nancy bounced out of the room. The merest semblance of a cynical smile stole over the features of Pitsligo, and as he saw Thalia following her friend, he spoke to her courteously:

"May I ask you to remain for a moment or two, Madame? I missed the ticket you promised to send me that I might witness the histrionic triumphs which have delighted London. You forgot the poor old man who has pleasant recollections of your kindness on the steamer."

She paused, flattered and pleased, and faltered out an apology for her remissness.

"You are easily forgiven, Madame, though I never knew what I missed until you acted so admirably for me the other day in private when you rendered me an important service."

"I acted? I rendered a service?"

"Yes, you; do not pretend to be surprised. You started doubts which have led to the recovery of kindred dear to me. I was not certain of your identity when

Digitized by Google

you were here last, but as soon as you appeared to-day I was sure. I am grateful, and will you favour me by accepting this precious stone? It is from South Africa. Alas! for the anguish her wealth has entailed on her! I am sorry it is unset, but it is well worth a frame of gold, as it would serve for a prince's ransom. There, there, no thanks, only"—and he whispered that Angelica might not hear—"keep it from the clutches of Rowallan, and keep yourself from his clutches too." As he thus whispered and thrust the diamond into her hand, he gently pushed her towards the door and committed her to the obsequious attentions of Calmay. Then facing the little group, and apparently struggling with overmastering melancholy, he said: "I desire to spend an hour with my sister and Fiona alone. There are family affairs to be talked over, particularly Zinnia's relations with Rowallan and Youtsay. You won't object, your Grace?"

"No; if you will hand them over to my guardianship afterwards forever and a day."

"You honour us, your Grace. This afternoon early I shall be highly favoured if your Lordship and Miss Rowallan will meet with me and mine. There are business details to be decided; for the house of Kincardine must be restored to more than its ancient splendour. And before I meet with Orlop—you have not told me where he is—I must advise with your Grace and with one skilled in the law." Zinnia with tears attempted to speak, but Pitsligo gave her no opportunity, himself continuing: "And we must act unitedly towards Rowallan, whose spurious child, I learn from his Grace, was buried yesterday."

"What!" exclaimed Angelica. "Tina dead—dead—I knew she was sick, but——"

"Then you had not heard of the impostor's death?"

"Not a word, I assure you, or I would have told you. I will go to Lancaster Gate and ascertain, if possible, what this secrecy means."

Pitsligo shook his head sadly, and then recollecting himself, resumed: "But I must not overlook this

Digitized by Google

heroic youth who saved Fiona. You say his name is Carfrae?" His sister was startled. "A young man you said?" she inquired.

"Yes," replied the Duke. Zinnia was again composed.

"And what shall I do now?" Pitsligo asked. "You say he is a hero, and he saved my child." He drew Fiona to him fondly. "What is this deed of his worth, Fiona? In a story he would have run off with you and compelled you to marry him—and then you would never have been a Duchess." She blushed and was glad of an old uncle in whose beard she could conceal her heightened colour. "Well, the youth shall not be entirely cheated. You shall write him this very day and thank him, and you shall enclose to him from me my claims on the Steamship Company for £200,000, and that will enable him to enter the firm as a partner."

"But is not that magnificent sum far beyond his deserts?" incautiously asked the Duke.

"That is for your Grace to decide. Would you take £200,000 for Fiona?"

"Heavens, no; not a million times four hundred—and not for all the wealth of Australia!"

"I believe your Lordship. Let us not begrudge this paltry sum. It will bring happiness to a worthy man, and help the Steamship Company, and may be the means of settling by and by some fair lady in a prosperous home."

He was thinking of Olympia.

Digitized by Google

XXXI

THE COLLAPSE OF THE EMANCIPATOR BUBBLE

CHRISTMAS day was spent by Rowallan in his office. Books and papers, with incriminating memoranda, were reduced to ashes, and other documents, fitted to confuse and mislead investigation, were duly classified and substituted. A considerable sum was abstracted from the safe, but several bank-notes and some gold were left untouched so as to avert the suspicion of a vulgar robbery.

With the utmost care a letter was prepared, addressed to the Directors of the Emancipator Mining and Building Co., Limited, setting forth the uncontrollable circumstances which had led to its financial unsoundness, and exonerating the writer himself from blame. To this was added the statement that if he disappeared from notice for a time it was only due to the fact that when business ventures meet with reverses it was customary to make a scapegoat of some innocent official, and he preferred therefore to absent himself until the excitement of the public had had opportunity to abate.

Pleased with his fine work, Rowallan late at night returned to Lancaster Gate, expecting to find Mrs. Quaco in a more reasonable frame of mind, and ready to talk sanely about the funeral of her daughter, and about the terms on which they would agree to separate without prejudice to either party, for he desired as far as possible to avoid scandal. To his amazement the woman was not in the house, and he was soon made acquainted with all that the domestics knew of her movements. She had decamped, taking her dead with her, but removing none of the handsome dresses and ornaments which his liberality had furnished. His first impression, seeing these

Digitized by Google

articles intact, was that she would come back, but this was thoroughly dispelled by a note which awaited him on his study table. He broke the seal. The handwriting was large, irregular, and blotched with ink. It read:

"Ghost of Jorge Avecomus. I believe, but I can't prove. Says I to myself,—'he did it'—and says I 'not a penny, not a bit of ribbon, not a thread from the man who murders my child.' May a mother's curse sink you into the deeps of everlasting fire.—LAISSINA."

The master anathematized her beneath his breath, and, with no trace of compunction in his face, he twisted the letter into a lighter for his cigar and saw it with satisfaction disappear in smoke. As an antidote to this poison, which, in spite of himself, throughout the night tormented him, Naoroji early in the morning brought to him the coveted diagram abstracted at no small hazard from the coat of Pitsligo Tysford. That served as a tonic of nerving and refreshing quality, and Rowallan arose from his bed a new man, or rather himself, the old man, with all of his Mephistophelian cunning, reanimated. He had smiles and congratulations for the faithful Hindu, and the faithful Hindu had a skean dhu and several precious stones for himself.

A plan of action was speedily decided on; for this last day in the metropolis was necessarily a busy one, and crowded with pressing and peremptory activities. Rowallan, after breakfast, paid off and dismissed the servants, not condescending to explain his arbitrary conduct. The house was then closed. Naoroji alone being left to pack and prepare for their departure by the North German Lloyd Steamer, leaving Southampton at midnight for New York, and from thence to San Francisco, and from thence to ———; but not even to the Hindu had Rowallan intrusted the secret of their final destination. Naoroji guessed, but he had not been told.

On the afternoon of the day following Rowallan's secret embarkation, at the close of the conference between Pitsligo and Zinnia, Fiona and the Duke, Sergeant Gowanlock was summoned to a private interview.

Digitized by Google

"You know Orlop Youtsay by sight," Pitsligo half-inquiringly began the conversation, "and with your skill in fathoming secrets you ought to be able to ascertain what has become of him. He was last heard of among the public houses near the docks, and there the trail was lost. Will you undertake this task?"

"Yes, your honour, and at once."

"Thank you, I thought you would. Here are £500. You will need money for your personal expenses, and you may have to procure aid, and your inquiries may lead you to some other parts of the country. I do not want you if you strike the trail to be delayed in following it up for lack of funds. You understand?"

"Yes, your honour, I'm to set out sharp, and keep on going until I have my man, living or dead. It shall be done. But before I start, sir, may I say a word?"

"Say what you please, Sergeant."

"I don't want you to think hard of me for what my wife's been doing to trouble you. It isn't for a man to be talking against his own flesh, and so I keep silent. If she'd only joined, as I wished, 'The Sublime Order of the Western Star,' or 'The Magnanimous Daughters of Ruth,' she'd have been so refined and exalted by the ritual that it would have been impossible for her to take on as she did. Just let me repeat a section or two from the Manual that you may yourself see ——"

"No, no, Sergeant," Pitsligo hurriedly exclaimed. "I can take your word for the value of these teachings, and you have no time to spare."

"There is," Dick replied, "another subject I must speak about before I leave you. Tina ——"

"Perhaps you'd better not refer to that little cheat. Ah, how she deceived me, with her simplicity and her childish ways."

"But," retorted Dick stoutly, "she did not deceive you. She was no cheat!" And straightway he related all that Mrs. Quaco had told him of her own sinful career, of her conspiracy with Rowallan, and of the circumstances which lent themselves to the creation of belief in

Digitized by Google

the mind of Tina that she was in truth his daughter. "And to me as a soldier, it don't seem right that you should misjudge the child. I couldn't let you go on thinking as how Tina was a cheat, and I determined to speak, though I should lose my place, sir. There never was a better girl, sir, than Tina Quaco, an' none that'll make a prettier angel in heaven, if," he added meditatively, "she only has wings to fit her and she can keep 'em on. And if ever I gets money enough I'll put up a white tombstone, not large, but small like herself, and I'll get some fellow to write on it—'Tina Quaco, Of such is the kingdom of Heaven. Amen.' For if Heaven ain't made for the likes of her then it can't be much of a place after all and not worth bothering about."

Pitsligo had listened to Dick patiently. He admired the old warrior's loyalty to the dead girl, and in his gentle heart he acquitted her of blame and began to condemn himself for his suspicions. On the other hand what depths of depravity had been disclosed before his eyes, what shameless trafficking in honour, in natural feeling and in all things most sacred, for the sake of securing the money which its owner did not prize and which he had never coveted. He feared also that he himself had played a fool's part, and he felt that he was no match for the craftiness of civilization. In the bitterness of his soul he wondered if he could ever be anything to those who were around him but a pigeon to be plucked and a gudgeon to be hooked. As he sat musing in this misanthropical vein, and as the doughty Sergeant was starting on his quest, the friends with whom he had so recently been exchanging confidences excitedly broke in on his privacy. They had various newspapers in their hands, and each tried to get in a word in advance of the other.

"Uncle, uncle," cried Fiona, "The Emancipator Company is insolvent. All the afternoon papers declare that it is a financial wreck——"

"And," interjected Zinnia, "that hundreds of poor people are ruined."

Digitized by Google

"Also," feverishly spoke the Duke, "Rowallan has disappeared, and public opinion holds him accountable for the disaster!"

"But," interposed Angelica, in an apologetic tone, "we must not condemn him unheard. Remember the manly letter he sent to the directors, explaining his absence. That has been printed and in it he says he went away because he knew he would be made a scapegoat for other men's sins. And then he is not the only one condemned!"

"May I ask you," inquired Pitsligo, "to let one tell me what has taken place, and what is said by the press about this catastrophe? I can't comprehend while all are trying to talk at once. Let the Duke speak."

"The story is soon told. A directors' meeting was called for this morning, and a quorum for a wonder were present. A letter from Rowallan was placed in their hands and they soon learned their insolvent condition. According to the *Evening Reverberator*, a stormy session ensued. Messengers were sent in hot haste for myself. As it happened I was here and not in my own apartments, and my valet was unnecessarily reticent. Failing to appear, the muddled directors in their vehement indignation saw fit to say what they had no warrant for saying, and hence these startling headlines —

"'*A Noble Duke Gone Wrong.*'

"'*An Ancient Name Dragged in the Mire!*'

"'*Fraud!! Rascality!!*'

"'*A Precious Peer!!!*'"

"It was the repeating of these startling words by the newspaper sellers," said Fiona, in a ferment of anxiety, "that aroused our attention to what was going on, and having glanced over the sensational statements we hastened to you, uncle, for I am shocked and heart-sore over these base and terrible calumnies." She drew close to

Digitized by Google

Comyn as though by her proximity and touch to assure him of her absolute confidence and sympathy. The demeanour of Pitsligo, always serious, had become, while the Duke and Fiona were speaking, painfully solemn. Before he had time to frame a suitable reply to their representations, his Grace again spoke.

"This affair is exceedingly grave, and I shall confront my detractors—for I have not done anything to bring a flush of shame to the brow of a Kincardine—and I will insult no woman by asking her to be my wife unless this reproach is removed from my name."

"Did I not understand your lordship," inquired Pitsligo, "that you gave to this corporation the use of your name, and that you never took the pains to ascertain for yourself whether it was entitled to your confidence?"

"Why, yes; but then you see I am not in trade——"

"True, your Grace, and for just that reason you ought to have been more careful than to lend the sanction of your nobility to a lot of promotors and speculators. You are not clear of responsibility, and the poorer investors who have been robbed of their all will not be far wrong in holding you accountable."

"If that is your deliberate judgment, Mr. Tysford, then only one course is open to me, and that is to sell every acre and stick that I have and reimburse these people as far as I am able, and for myself begin life over again somewhere, and in some position, however modest."

The face of Fiona was radiant with delight as she heard her lover's manly avowal, and she put her arm around him and said:

"And then you will no longer be a Duke, but only Comyn, and we will ever after be to each other, Fiona and Comyn. I shall feel nearer to you and I will work my fingers to the bone that you may stand fair in the good opinion of all men, as you do at this hour in mine."

He answered: "My blessed one, your love, such a love as this, is worth more than all the lands and houses I shall lose."

"But," murmured Pitsligo, "you forget me."

Digitized by Google

"Why, no, uncle, what do you mean?"

"I mean that there are several useless millions in the bank to my credit, and they can be devoted to no better purpose than to avert disgrace from the auld house." He spoke as though his proposal were an every-day, commonplace affair, undeserving of special comment. But the Duke could hardly believe his own ears. He did not see in this ordinary-looking man who made this offer the least sign of exultation or of vanity. After a pause the Duke's answer came:

"This is princely, Mr. Tysford, but I never could repay such a sum, and I have no claim on your generosity."

"But Fiona has, and if you will only take good care of her, you will repay me more than I deserve."

"A million, ten millions are not necessary to guarantee that; and I should, indeed, be a churl to begin by spending my wife's dower."

"Listen, your Grace," resumed Pitsligo, "you have done more for us than we can do for you—differences in rank you have overlooked, and are to ally yourself to our humble stock. Whatever of property or money I have is my family's as well as mine, and love has made you of our household. Then for the sake of the poor who are despairing this evening, and for the sake of your own honour, put away false pride—let me place to your credit what is yours—and to-morrow morning go to the office, face the crowd and answer your villifiers, that you as president, and Miss Rowallan, as the representative of her father, will pay within forty hours, or as fast as they can be verified, all claims against the company, and purchase and cancel all of its securities."

"But," exclaimed the Duke, "this opulence of liberality may call for more than five millions; for there evidently has been waste as well as misappropriation."

"What of it? If ten are necessary they can be had in a few hours by cable from Australia."

"And have you thought, Dawn—Mr. Tysford, I mean," Angelica suggested, "that by having Fiona act as the representative of her father, you are in fact rehabilitating

Digitized by Google

my brother and rescuing his name as well as the Duke's from obloquy?"

He replied: "I know what is passing through your mind. Let me say candidly, were Powrie Rowallan only concerned I would leave him to the consequences of his infamies. I am no saint, and I am not sure from what I know of them, at least in the business world, that I care to be one. I am not thinking of him, only of others whom he has disgraced. And if I can help it, his Lordship, after he is married, shall not be wounded to the quick by hearing that the father of his proud wife was a miserable conspirator, one who in cold blood robbed the poor, and one who probably would not stop even at mur——"

"O Dawney! for God's sake, remember he is my brother. You go too far."

"O uncle, uncle, do not forget he is my father."

"Ah," he added coldly, "that it should be so—to a woman kinship usually means more than truth and honour. I am sorry that I anger you. I suppose I am hard, unfeeling—but then I know what I know. I will no farther offend."

"Dawney, I entreat you, do not misunderstand me."

"I think I understand well enough the Mistress of Rowallan, and I do not deny that her solicitude is touching. But let us change the subject. Your Grace," and here the Scotch side of his character reappeared, "when you meet the creditors and stockholders to-morrow, do not offer to pay the face value of all securities. Have the books and entries examined, and where men have received stock as a gift for the use of their names, even if it be a Duke's name, do not redeem that. Nothing was given and nothing should be restored. Or if directors and others paid for their holdings only a trifle of their real value, let them have in return just what they expended—no more. They were let in on the kitchen floor, and you must not treat them as though they were entitled to the privileges of the parlour. And when you have dealt fairly and squarely with these parties, I am inclined

Digitized by Google

to believe that the sum you have named will meet and perhaps more than meet every legitimate claim."

The smash of the Emancipator Company was the talk of the town next morning. Capitalists, merchants, clerks, discussed it on the way to the city, and newspapers had turgid and mordant editorials on the subject. From the denunciations heard on every side the inference might be drawn that the virtuous soil of London had never grown such a upas tree before, and that none of the virulent critics were at that very moment engaged in similar undertakings.

Language for once failed the magniloquent Pinchover. His chest perceptibly contracted, his effusive whiskers drooped, and his polished tile could not be brought into that jaunty and audacious position on his head which had been so highly admired and so vainly imitated on 'Change. As he confronted the extent of the disaster and what it meant to him in the loss of cash and prestige, he wilted, and his bounce and tall talk were ignominiously squelched. Nor had his beloved Amaryllis received the distressing news in an Arcadian temper, or in the spirit of one who believed in the phantasmagorial emptiness of all sublunary things. Sickness was illusive to Mrs. Pinchover, but the inconveniences of poverty were not. These at least were painfully real, though she never could explain why the cravings of hunger were actual and the agonies of disease fictitious.

When her husband had burst into her apartment with the terrible tidings of what had taken place, she had collapsed and had to be put to bed, where she lay bemoaning her misfortune through the night. At this crisis Olympia proved herself to be the stay of the household. She reminded her squashed and extinguished parent of the good fortune that had come to him only a few hours before this catastrophe in the proposal of Mitchie Carfrae to invest £200,000 in The Sovereign Steamship Company. "A most interesting and intelligent young man, and one whom if my heart did not deceive me when he met me for the first time last evening, may in a little

Digitized by Google

while become to you more than a partner," and she blushed.

"Umph!" Pinchover replied ruthlessly, "the mischief of it is, your heart always deceives you."

"Father, you are brutal!" and the timorous and attenuated maiden, whose affections had so frequently been blighted, fled to the congenial solitude of her own room.

Jabez dreaded to go, but he could not stay away. The meeting of the directors that morning was imperative and his absence would be severely criticised by the entire business world. It was, however, only with the greatest difficulty that he could make his way through the crowds to the office entrance. The street in front of the door, and extending a good distance on either side was full of people,—men, women, children, well-to-do and poor, clerks, artisans and mechanics, widows and wage-earning girls—chattering, disputing, gesticulating and breathing out threats against the nabobs who had swindled them. Andrew Struthers, the gardener, was one of this motley assembly. His master had given him the tip and he had invested his savings in Emancipator shares, and he had been among the first to arrive on the ground in the hope that the early bird might pick up some adventurous and unsuspecting worm. As Pinchover pushed through the throng, Andrew was holding forth in words of Doric wisdom:

"Tak' pairt o' the pelf when the pack's dealing. Rue and thyme grow baith in ae garden. I ken how the world wags; he's honour'd maist has moniest bags. Mak' the best o' a bad bargain."

"Hush there, will you," cried one of the multitude. "See, the gentleman yonder wants to be heard."

The Duke had come to the open door bare-headed and was waving his hand so as to obtain silence. One who recognized him cried out: "It is the president of the company!"

"Then he has not run away," exclaimed another. "How young he is!"

"My, what a lot of red hair he has."

Digitized by Google

"Ladies and gentlemen, friends," he began, and was interrupted as word passed through the crowd who he was, with groans and hisses and other signs of hostility. "Let me speak only for a few minutes," he pleaded, "and then hoot and curse if you will." His manly figure, his clear, penetrating voice, obtained for him the mastery over the surging, angry mass before him.

"I am no orator, only a soldier; and I want you to see that I don't fear to look you in the face. Were I an embezzler or a defaulter I wouldn't be here." A voice in the crowd retorted—"We'd rather see our money," and another cried: "What's become of the cash?"

"No disturbance there," authoritatively interposed a policeman.

The Duke, as soon as quiet was restored proceeded as though he had not been interrupted: "The Emancipator Company is not bankrupt."

Incredulous groans followed the announcement.

"I tell you what is true. The Company is not insolvent. It's only going into liquidation. Errors have been committed, investments have failed, calculations have miscarried, and Mr. Rowallan ——" A storm of hisses greeted the mention of his name, and it took several minutes to restore order. "I'm not here either to explain the blunders he has committed or to apologize for them. They have been many and irreparable, and have brought us to the brink of ruin; but we are not going over the precipice. We must go out of business, but we shall not go out and leave you to suffer."

A faint cheer arose, and immediately died away.

"Every penny of indebtedness will be paid, and all shares redeemed, and after the property on the embankment and some other assets have been turned into cash, whatever additional money may be necessary for liquidation, I as president of the Company, and Miss Rowallan, as representative of her father, pledge ourselves to provide."

Now, the feeble shouts gave way to emphatic heartiness. At the promise of relief some of the women wept,

Digitized by Google

men shook hands with each other, and some waved their handkerchiefs. Then moved by a new impulse the crowd began to cry: "God bless the Duke! Blessings on you, sir, and on the young lady!" Cheer after cheer was vociferously given; but as Kincardine bowed, he realized that unwittingly he had conveyed a wrong impression. The people naturally inferred that it was his money and Fiona's that was to repair their fortunes, and he was receiving praises and blessings which in justice belonged to another. The form of the lonely old man rose before him, and the chivalry of his nature revolted from the false position in which he found himself. He knew that Pitsligo would be grieved and wounded at the mention of his name and generous intentions, and would shrink sensitively from the publicity which absolute fair dealing towards him would entail. But he could not keep back the truth and retain his own self-respect, and, therefore, extending his hand to secure attention, again he spoke:

"I've given you Miss Rowallan's pledge and my own that the needed money shall be forthcoming; but I've not told you through whose greatness of heart we are in a position to speak thus confidently. Listen! There is at present in London an aged man, who, though born poor has gathered much, very much, of this world's goods, and who, though living a retired life, feels very deeply for the necessities of others, and takes a profound interest in whatever concerns the credit and well-being of the community. It is he, who for reasons of his own, for reasons I am not at liberty to reveal, but supremely for the sake of aiding the public in this emergency, places at our disposal the large sum of money which two of us have guaranteed to-day. Your gratitude, therefore, is not due to me, but rather to this stranger among us,—to Mr. Pitsligo Tysford, and let it be added, to Miss Rowallan, who offered to work her fingers to the bone rather than you should suffer loss, and for whose happiness the Australian would lay down his fortune and his life."

Digitized by Google

The Duke did not tarry to observe the effect of his speech. As he retired from view the people shouted lustily for their benefactor, and immediately impromptu meetings were held on the sidewalk and in the centre of the thoroughfare, while a babel of chattering voices indicated that important matters were under discussion. Newspaper reporters ran hither and thither, gathering the sentences that fell from the lips of fervid speakers, and Andrew Struthers, as soon as it was noised abroad that he had met and knew this benevolent millionaire, was made the hero of the occasion, and might have achieved renown as a leader but for his excruciating dialect and his devotion to the inscrutable proverbial wisdom of his countrymen.

While the crowds were striving to arrive at some plan of concerted action by which they might express to Pitsligo Tysford their appreciation of his public-spirited benefaction, the Red Comyn was withdrawing from all further association with the directors of the Emancipator Company. Mr. Pinchover was present, also the Honourable Hyperion Goggles, the Major of Hussars, and the rest, most of them figure-heads only intent on dividends they had done nothing to earn. His Grace, after making clear the business arrangements for the winding up of the Company's affairs, addressed to them a few parting words:

"Gentlemen, I cannot separate from you without venturing to observe that I hold you in no small degree responsible for the crisis through which we are passing. As directors you have given no serious attention to the affairs of the Company, and you have been trading on the title of a noble simpleton who imagined that in permitting you to use his name he was to benefit large numbers of honest wage-earners. He is now conscious of his stupidity, and now perceives what he was so dull as not to comprehend earlier, that your interest in his welfare and the loans of money you almost thrust upon him, were parts of the scheme to blind the eyes of your dupe.

Digitized by Google

"I do not exonerate myself from blame; but I do hold you to be more highly culpable. And I must condemn such business methods as involve the criminal disregard of the financial interests of others, and which while they may enrich a few, in the long run must inevitably impoverish the many. Such ethics may be consistent with trade, but they are thoroughly distasteful and repugnant to a Kincardine; and the one who at present bears that name no longer cares for the acquaintance of gentlemen who could take advantage of his inexperience to make him share in the odium of their loose notions of fiducial responsibilities. Good-day."

Without bestowing a thought on the consternation into which his plain speaking had thrown his former associates, his Grace left the room. As he passed out of the building and was about to take the reins of his trap, an orderly from the Horse Guards rode up to him on a panting horse, and saluting, handed him an official-looking paper. The Duke glanced it over and replied:

"Immediately, as fast as I can drive there."

Two hours later in the afternoon, he was closeted with his friend, Blair Hamley.

"I have just been conferring with Sir Garnet Woolsely, and from his own lips I have received depressing tidings of our affairs in South Africa. The Boers have defeated our men at several points, are invading Cape Colony and the post at Helvetia is in imminent peril. I am ordered with other officers to join the reinforcements which are to sail in a few days from Southampton on the *Canada*."

"But you could resign," suggested Hamley.

"Yes, I could throw up my commission. But Scotchmen do not generally retire into private life in the face of the enemy. No; I must go, and you would not have much respect for me if I stayed at home. But I have made up my mind to be married before I join the colours. These Boers are capital shots, and who knows? Well, if I am to share the fate of many of our gallant fellows, I prefer to leave a widow—that's all, and I want you to help me to do so."

Digitized by Google

Blair Hamley was startled by his words. Kincardine, seeing his confusion, smilingly resumed: "I did not mean that you should be privy to my taking off, only that you should make all the arrangement and marry me as soon as possible."

The colour came and went in the face of the clergyman, and his manner betrayed extreme embarrassment. But he regained somewhat his self-possession, and looking straight into the eyes of his friend he answered:

"That service I cannot render your Grace. I have been transparently honest with you. I have laid bare my heart, have told you my secret. She knows nothing of all this and suspects nothing—and never shall. I return to my work and to my ideals. I can pray for you and for her. From the depths of my soul I can invoke God's blessing to be upon you both. But to solemnize marriage between you, to ask her to 'love, honour and obey' another, to see her in her bridal beauty and to touch her hand, would be too much for me. It would revive the old conflict, it would outrage my most sacred feelings, and in the whirlwind of my poor human weakness I might myself at the altar of God forbid the banns. No; the peril is too great, the sacrilege too manifest. You are a Presbyterian, so is she. Why not have the minister of your own Church—at Regent's Square, or in Upper George Street—join you and your chosen one in holy wedlock? It would be holy then."

The Duke was moved by the passionate utterance of his friend, and was not slow to comprehend all that was passing through his soul.

"You are right," he replied, "and you must forgive my thoughtlessness. I have wounded you, but it was unintentional. Pardon me!"

"Say nothing, your Lordship, about forgiveness. I have, however, one request to make. When—it—is over, and before you sail, promise me to visit the doss house on Dorset Street with the Duchess. Your presence there with her will open the eyes of the poor people to the groundlessness of their base insinuations, and

Digitized by Google

will remove a serious obstacle from the way of my endeavours to benefit them. It will not be hard for you to find an excuse for such a visit, even royal personages have gone 'slumming.'"

"I will cheerfully do as you desire, and you in your turn must promise me—should I fall on the veldt, to tell Fiona everything—mark what I say—everything."

While the peer and the priest were conversing, Kincardine House was almost in a state of siege, and telegrams and letters were pouring in incessantly. The news of what had transpired during the forenoon had travelled fast and far, and the many shareholders in the moribund Emancipator Company were intent on expressing their grateful appreciation of Tysford's intervention by their presence or by their messages. Their benefactor was beside himself with fright and grief. He was disquieted, harrowed and tormented by all this pother.

He was forlorn and bitterly censured the Duke for exposing him to this unwelcome notoriety. Two or three of the earlier callers he had seen, and several of the communications he had scanned. Exaggerated accounts of Kincardine's speech, coupled with highly coloured reports of what the grateful citizens proposed, with an imaginary sketch of his own life, published in the newspapers, had been brought to his attention and had been read with shuddering dislike and disdain. He abruptly shut himself up in his room, was denied to visitors, and was determined that no more dispatches or notes should reach him. He could not fail, however, to hear the repeated clanging of the house-bell, the buzz and hum of many voices in the street below, and the frequent huzzas, coupled with his own name. Neither could he quite escape the importunities of his sister and Fiona, who could not comprehend his discourteous bashfulness and constraint. But even they could not overcome his repugnance for everything like publicity and could not prevail on him to treat those who came to honour him with decent respect and politeness. He was stubborn, immovable, and Zinnia mourned that he was so glum

Digitized by Google

and churlish. At last, as the night deepened, the enthusiastic throngs melted away, and the noises in the dwelling subsided, and he was grateful for the silence.

"And what should he do now?"

This question in a great variety of its phases he mentally debated. Why should he remain longer in England? Had he not fulfilled his obligations to his sister and her child, and repaid the house of Kincardine for all of its kindnesses to his forbears, and had he not attempted to inaugurate a movement helpful to womanhood?

What more could he do? Why tarry now that the task which had brought him so far from the land of flowers appeared to be complete? Was he not out of place in this old world with its multitudinous sins and shames? Had not his sojourn prompted deceptions, plots and crimes? With the evidence of Rowallan's guilt and of Ichabod's villainy before him, had he not reason to fear that some one for the sake of gold might unearth the story of his flight from Edinburgh, and he be compelled in defending himself to wound and offend his sister, his niece, the Duke and the Mistress of Rowallan by exposing the real çulprit? Such a catastrophe must be avoided at any cost.

And then as to the ties that seemed to bind him to the old world, were they not brittle and superficial? Was it not memory rather than affection that bound his sister to him? How could she love one whom she had never really known? Nor could he suppose that the young people, however disinterested—Comyn, Fiona—could ever be genuinely attached to one as old and as uncivilized as himself. The Mistress of Rowallan, also, notwithstanding her gracious kindness to him, it would be unreasonable to expect could feel again towards him as she had felt in her girlhood; and then she was not his Angelica, not the Angelica of his youth as he remembered her and as she had appeared to him in his lonely wanderings for nearly half a century of years.

For himself, for his peace, for his happiness he had gained nothing by his voyage to the motherland. He

Digitized by Google

had only come to be apprehensive, distrustful, suspicious; and had only been made to feel more keenly how poor he was and how despicable his possessions after all his anxieties and cares.

Dreamily he took a pencil and drew a line down the centre of a piece of paper; and impelled by his gloomy reflections proceeded to detail an inventory of his belongings.

PROFIT:	LOSS:
Money,	Family,
Much money,	Home,
More money,	Country,
Increasing money,	Friends,
And only money.	Peace.

After Pitsligo had finished this depressing summary he crossed the room and from a closet drew out the package containing his worn and seamy raiment; then he sat down and wrote. He penned letters to the Duke, to Fiona, to Zinnia, to Pinchover, to his lawyers, and the last one he addressed to the Mistress of Rowallan. It was as follows:

"The time has come for me to leave England. My mission is finished. I feel that I can do no more; and when I recall the treachery and the misdeeds to which I have unwittingly given rise I fear I have done more harm than good by my presence. I see, too, that my longer continuance here may prove an annoyance and a source of apprehension to those whom I desire in every way to benefit and not to harm. The publicity to which I am exposed may lead to the discovery of my identity and to the story of the crime for which I unjustly suffered. And were the charge revived, and were I to defend myself, then my sister, my niece, the Duke and yourself—all I care for on earth—would be disgraced by the exposure and punishment of the real offender. Were I not to defend myself, and were I quietly to accept the stigma and the doom deserved by another, the same grief and shame would overtake those whom I am

Digitized by Google

bound to protect. I was sacrificed when a youth for the fair fame of others, and now that I am old and weary why should I hesitate to sacrifice myself for the honour and happiness of those I love.

"Adieu, dear Mistress of Rowallan, and let me thank you for all your goodness. Believe me, I shall always remember with gratitude how you have guided and comforted me. Forget Dawney Macgillivray. You know he has been a long while dead. Farewell, and when you recall the last few weeks, let a kindly thought follow the lonely man, who fears he may have darkened the brightness of your path, but who till he closes his eyes in death beneath the Southern Cross will cherish the memory of the days spent with the Mistress of Rowallan."

At an early hour next morning Pitsligo ordered Calmay to hail a cab. He said that private business affairs called him away for a season, and he directed Calmay to state to his friends that they would hear from him before evening. The footman observed that he took with him a curious bundle and a long stick resembling an Alpine stock, and that he was dejected. He was not inclined to be communicative, and uttered no other words than were necessary to explain his departure; but he did pause for several moments and gaze longingly at the house, then with a deep sigh, he entered the cab and was driven away.

Late in the day, when Angelica and Zinnia were beginning to be anxious, letters addressed to them and to others in the house were received from Southampton and conveyed the intelligence that Pitsligo Tysford was sailing by the "Peninsula Line" for Australia.

Digitized by Google

III. THE EPILOGUE

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made of; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

I

THE PERILS OF A WANDERER AND A GATHERER

TOWARDS the end of the Australian summer a little old lady dressed in black, with a close fitting black bonnet, bordered with a simple white frill, on her head, and holding a well-filled black bag in her hand, was seated, not far from her maid, a sturdy, plain-featured woman, in the office of Warren Emden on Collins Street, Melbourne.

The steamboat manager had just finished the perusal of a high-flown missive from Jabez Pinchover commending to his courtesies the bearer who was making the long journey for the purpose of fulfilling a sacred duty—the precise nature of which the inflated correspondent did not describe even if he knew. Folding up the weighty letter,—for all Mr. Pinchover's communications were weighty, frequently calling for double postage—Mr. Emden politely declared himself ready to do all that he could to meet the wishes of so "sensible and saintly a servant of the Lord"—for thus had she been described by the alliterative pen of the altiloquent writer.

"Believe me," replied his visitor, "I have no intention of taxing your good nature. My business in Australia is with Mr. Pitsligo Tysford; and when I saw Mr. Pinchover about my passage out and told him whom I desired to see, he was kind enough to say that you would know how to bring Mr. Tysford and myself together."

"Well, well, this is very extraordinary!"

The little old lady flushed and fanned herself with a convenient newspaper.

"What is extraordinary?" she answered. "You must excuse me, Mr. Emden, if I appear dull; but really I don't understand your meaning."

Digitized by Google

"Why, only this: that for the last few days this office has been a bureau of information, and has been beset with a variety of questions concerning the affairs of Mr. Tysford. First of all, a sailor who used to sail with Captain Aylward, astonished us by turning up. We knew he had been granted leave of absence from his ship, and we were not looking for him. He came in here to arrange for the voyage home; and he told a rambling story of his having been drinking heavily in London and of his having been shanghaied on board a tramp steamer bound for this port. As he spoke it was clear enough that he was not sober. His speech was maudlin and coarse, especially when without any good reason he dragged Mr. Tysford's name into the conversation. Then he loudly declared that as soon as he reached England he'd drag that black-hearted pirate to the bar of justice. I did my best to quiet him, but as it is useless arguing with a tipsy man, I ordered him out; and when he became only more furious and profane I had him pitched into the street."

"Was he hurt?" the old lady meekly inquired, but from the tone of her voice it was not easy to decide whether she sympathized with the infuriated jack tar, or whether it would have gratified her to learn that his mortal remains had been removed from the cobble-stones to an undertaker's establishment.

"I'm not sure," resumed Emden. "I wasn't sufficiently interested in the fellow to ascertain whether his bones were broken or not. But listen to what followed. Yesterday an old chap called who said he had been a soldier, and who eyed us all so queerly and made such strange gestures, at one time sticking his thumb into his chin as though it were a pike, and at another whirling his hand around his ear, that I was not sure as to his sanity. But he talked intelligibly enough, if his manners were comical. The old chap informed me that he had been in the service of Mr. Tysford in England and that he'd been sent by him to discover the whereabouts of this same drunken seaman; that learning he had been shipped

Digitized by Google

to Australia he had pursued him across the ocean, and as he knew the sailor had been in our employment he had come seeking information. He was staggered when I told him that from advices received I gathered that Mr. Tysford was in this country. This news seemed to upset him, and he asked for the millionaire's Melbourne address, and plied me with questions, as to what had brought him back so soon and other curious queries, which I was unable to answer. As I was not sure whether the old soldier was altogether sound in the upper story, I evaded his request and did not give him what he asked for."

"You might have trusted him. He told you the truth. Mr. Tysford has the greatest confidence in Sergeant Dick Gowanlock."

"Yes; that was the name he gave. But when I dismissed him I told him where he would probably find Orlop Youtsay, in the neighbourhood of the Yarra where seafolk are accustomed to congregate."

"I am very glad to hear of the worthy veteran, and I feel less lonely now that I know he is near. Can you tell me where he is staying?"

"No; I was not inquisitive and he was not communicative, at least on that point."

"Well, promise me, should he call again, or should you be able to speak with him, to tell him that I wish to see him at the Hotel Dootigala."

"Certainly, with pleasure." Emden made a memorandum, and then added: "We have a large mail for Mr. Tysford directed to our care; we have also a communication from Mr. Pinchover stating that in a moment of eccentricity Mr. Tysford had sailed on a Peninsula liner, and requesting me to seek him out and place in his hands the English letters."

"And have you been able to do so?"

"No, though I have tried. But the old gentleman is a character. He is always a wanderer. He may be here to-day and to-morrow be in Sydney. You may hunt for him there only to learn that he has gone to the Blue

Digitized by Google

Mountains and the Jenolan Caves, and when you have traced him to the caves, you may be told that he has set out for New Zealand. I have made inquiries at the Steamship Company's offices, also at the bank where he keeps large deposits, and finally at a building he owns on Elizabeth Street almost in sight of the old cemetery, where he has lodgings; and the total information gained was that he had recently been in the city, appearing as worn and dilapidated as ever, and that he was off again, probably on one of his protracted tramps."

The old lady's countenance lost its cheery glow as she listened, but she bravely answered, though her soft voice quivered perceptibly: "We must not be discouraged. You will make all possible inquiries and I will do the same; and if I can only enlist the diligence of Sergeant Dick we may be more successful than now seems likely."

She then very tactfully changed the subject, and did her best to elicit from Emden facts and opinions relative to the religious life of Melbourne, the condition of its wage-earning girls and the opportunities afforded by its industrial development for working women. Perceiving at last from the obscure and vague answers she received that unintentionally she had plunged her amiable host into waters beyond his depth, she apologized for consuming so much of his valuable time, and having received directions how to find the famous Scotch Church on the way to Fitzroy Gardens, Angelica Rowallan, attended by her maid, took her departure.

She had not proceeded far when her eye rested on a sign bearing the inscription "Elizabeth Street." At once she came to a sudden halt. When she left the office she had no idea that this thoroughfare intersected the road leading to the notable Presbyterian sanctuary. Rising, as it seemed to her, invitingly before her, after a moment's debate with herself, she turned out of Collins Street and leaving the Yarra River behind, set out on a brisk walk, as though she were minded to visit the University or the Royal Park. But before these interesting

Digitized by Google

localities could be reached, she caught a glimpse of the Old Cemetery, the city of the dead environed by the city of the living, and she knew she was near to the place Pitsligo preserved as a refuge in his loneliness. It was not difficult to identify the house, and she approached the door, which she found partly opened and held in its position by the hand of a handsome Maori woman, over whose rich, abundant coal-black hair barely fifty summers could have passed. She was tall, straight, supple, with a figure that might have served as a model of Venus, and with a face that even a Cleopatra would not have despised.

Angelica, turning her full honest gaze on the stately portress, timidly inquired: "Is this the dwelling where Mr. Tysford lives when he is in Melbourne?"

"It is where he stays," was all the answer given, and given in such a way as to suggest that the Maori woman drew a distinction between staying and living. The two women eyed each other curiously, though not rudely, and the older lady, old enough to be the mother of the younger, evidently produced a favourable impression by the sweet charm of her open countenance and by the sincerity that sounded in her voice.

"I have been told that he has left the city, and probably you can tell me where he is at present. I'm from England, and I undertook the fatiguing journey for the sole purpose of relieving his mind and heart from a distressing burden. If you can help me you will serve him. Will you not do so?"

"You surmise correctly. I can, for he keeps me informed of his movements," replied the Maori; "but he has left no orders and I know not how to act. I must think." She could not fail to observe, as she spoke, the pallor that overspread the face of Angelica, nor the trembling of her aged hands. With marked gentleness and tenderness she drew her out of the doorway, and as she led her forward, she said: "You are nearly exhausted. Come in and rest awhile. Instruct your maid to wait for you here. Lean on my arm. Let me

Digitized by Google

support you, and I will let you regain your strength in his rooms which no white woman has ever visited before."

Angelica did as she was requested, but as she clung to her conductress, her poor heart was troubled, and her steps faltered more than they ought, and when she reached the apartments she sank with more haste than politeness into the nearest chair.

The rooms were hardly furnished at all. There was a pallet covered with skins, a wooden table with writing materials, three or four seats of an unattractive make, and the beggarly dreariness was relieved by boughs and twigs of the myrtle, mimosa, kauri pine, red trees and eucalyptus, with samples of gum trees, cedars, pieces of basaltic rocks and quartz, and stuffed specimens of the bear, the kangaroo, the nightingale, the mocking-bird, and of parrots and paroquets gorgeous with brilliant plumage.

The total effect produced was that of a section of an Australian forest, transplanted to these modest quarters and the unification in one harmonious whole of plants, beasts and feathered creatures, not all of them found existing side by side in the same district. The only objects that tended to impair this illusion were the furniture and a few pictures suspended on the wall, crude pencil sketches and water colour daubs having for their theme the face of a girl, always the same face and of the same age. Angelica contemplated her singular surroundings, and, with something like reproach in her voice inquired: "And do you make this your place of abode with Mr. Tysford?"

"Yes, this is my home all the year round, except when I'm off with Mr. Tysford on one of his tramps; only my apartments are under these and are furnished more in keeping with the tastes of a woman."

"Do you mean that you are his wife?" And for the first time the voice of Angelica was slightly raised.

"What, I, his wife? Why, no, his thoughts are full of

Digitized by Google

a much younger woman than I am. He is everything to me, and I think I am much to him, always excepting that one."

"But are you not afraid that your relations with him may be misjudged and that your reputation may be injured?"

"A Maori heeds not the opinions of her enemies. The English have robbed her people of their lands, have almost exterminated her kindred, and she is not going to be guided by them in her friendships. They never can feel alike or see alike," and then in her native speech she added: "*Ka whawhai tonu, aké, aké, aké.*"

"Remember, you are speaking in an unknown tongue," mildly remonstrated Angelica.

"Pardon me! I was telling you that Mr. Tysford was completely under the sway of a younger woman than myself. Ever since I have had a knowledge of his ways I have known that he was trying to sketch or paint a face, always the same face, the face of a girl, and that he has never succeeded to his own satisfaction. I have known him spend the entire night in these foolish endeavours, and in the morning give them to the flames. A few of his daubs I rescued from destruction and have had them framed. When here he never interferes with them, but often stands a long while and looks at the pictures in turn, and shakes his head mournfully, as much as to say that they fail to reproduce the object of his adoration. You can inspect them for yourself, and you will notice, however faulty, each face reveals a resemblance to the other."

The little old lady wiped and put on her glasses, but they straightway became clouded. Her eyes were full of mist, and in spite of herself she sobbed audibly. After three or four futile attempts to look, she sat down again trembling painfully and murmuring—"Eh, Dawney, Dawney, thy love, like ain far higher, surpasses the love of woman. An' she sae unworthy!"

The conduct of Angelica mystified the Maori woman and roused in her a suspicion, but the suspicion disap-

Digitized by Google

peared as she realized the age and the feebleness of her visitor.

"To me ever since my infancy he has been father, benefactor, friend, master. All that I am or have I owe to him—even my life—and through many years I have existed only for him. When he is here I am happy, for then I can anticipate his wants, watch over him, wait on him. Often have I crouched all night on the mat at his door, fearing that harm might approach him and anxious at any peril to ward it from him."

"But don't you think that such risks are of questionable propriety? If a woman is going to preserve the respect of others she would better not sleep in that unprotected way at the door of any man—even of an anchorite."

"But one of your own Bible women went farther than I have done, and you read about Ruth and Boaz to your children."

"That may be," replied Angelica frigidly, "but I for one never went into ecstasies over the Moabitess. I have my own opinion of her indiscretion. And, then, we must not forget that she was directly under the care of Providence."

"And am not I? Does Providence abandon Wereroa because she is a Maoria and because the world has grown old? Does He change?"

"We would better not discuss these deep questions," Angelica replied.

"Well, let me tell you why I love and trust him. It all came about after the treaty of Waitangi had been violated by the British. Then King Tawhiao gathered the tribes about him and defied the civilized plunderers, and there was fighting, and bloodshed, and storming of Gate Pa and other defended settlements of our people. A final stand was made by Rewi, the chief, at Orakau near the upper Waipa. That must have been forty-two years ago or more, and I was a bit of a toddling child. The warriors kept their women and children with them, who shared in their exposures and their perils. The

Digitized by Google

British pressed Rewi sore, aud called on him to capitulate, or if he insisted on continuing the hopeless contest, to send the non-combatants beyond the lines. But Rewi climbed the breastwork and made reply: 'Our women are fighting too,' and he shouted: 'This is our last word, *Ka whawhai tonu, akê, akê, akê!*'"

"But what does the gibberish mean?"

"It means, We fight to the end, forever, forever, forever. These poor, brave people then sang the war song of their ancestors, and gathering their loved ones together, they attempted to rush the British and break through their lines. Indiscriminate slaughter ensued. The Maori made for the shelter of an adjacent forest, but their foes sabred them in their flight. No mercy was shown, and mothers, wives and babes were put to the sword. It was in the midst of this confusion, bloodshed and inhumanity that Pitsligo Tysford first saw me and became a child's protector and deliverer."

Angelica's interest had deepened as the narrative proceeded, and at this point she exclaimed: "And what was he doing there at such a time? Why, the young man might have been killed on the spot?"

"So he might, but he was not. He was in the North Island prospecting, and like other venturous spirits was fascinated by the sound of fighting, and pushed his way through the bush to where my father lay dead, and where my dying mother was entreating some one to care for her friendless child. Not for a moment did he hesitate, but with shots flying about him and sabres flashing over his head he accepted the charge and carried Wereroa in his arms from that ghastly field. Since then he has been everything to me,—friend, helper, defender, brother, father. He has had me educated, has placed more money than I need at my disposal, and has done all that he could to interest me in the great world which he despises. But no, my duty and my joy are to serve him, to tend him and if ever need be to die for him. I ask no nobler lot; I accept it *akê, akê, akê.*"

The narration of her story had a softening effect on

Digitized by Google

Wereroa, and her countenance shone serenely beautiful in the lambent light of the perfect love that filled her eyes. When she closed, Angelica had quite forgotten the improprieties, and found herself admiring and trusting this queenly woman whose affection was so strong and pure as to defy social customs. Yet notwithstanding the Maori's simple-hearted confidence, she hesitated to commit herself when Angelica urged her, for his sake, to remove the barriers that prevented the meeting for which she so greatly longed. She could only obtain the promise, and that reluctantly given, that Wereroa would think it over and answer on the morrow.

"Well, then," replied Angelica, "we must wait, but I shall pray that God may touch your heart with pity for him." The Maori woman smiled. "Why do you smile, Miss Wereroa? Do you not believe in prayer? Are you not a Christian?"

The answer came sharply and disdainfully: "Why should a Maori be a Christian? I grant you that the poorest Christianity is better than Hauhauism—but freedom from both is better than either. Christianity makes the Maori give their lands in exchange for their souls, and lest after that our souls should return to Hauhauism it drugs our bodies to death with strong drink. Well, I often wonder whether souls are worth saving."

"O, Miss Wereroa, you must not talk in that terrible way."

This conversation might have farther drifted into questionable channels had it not been for a slight disturbance which broke out in the lower hall, and which diverted the attention of the women. Both Angelica and Wereroa moved towards the landing and as they looked over the banister they saw Finella, Miss Rowallan's waiting woman ascending the stairs as fast as her weight would permit. Reaching the top, in answer to inquiries, she spoke hurriedly:

"It happened this way. I was standing by the open door looking into the street, and wondering what could detain missus so long, and I saw two men on the other

Digitized by Google

side with a little girl—she may have been eight years old or ten—and they were all busy staring at this house and seemed to be talking about it, when suddenly the child tore away from the men, darted across the street and made for me where I stood and almost upset me. She cried: 'Where's granddad? I want to see granddad.' But before I could find out anything one of the men had come up with her and seizing her roughly dragged her away, scolding and chiding, but as she left with him, and unseen by him, she dropped this paper and I thought that you ladies ought to see it at once." It was a crumpled bit of white paper covered with irregular printed letters, traced by a child's pencil, and after considerable trouble its contents were made out:

"Granddad, don't let 'em kill you. Dad promised to and so did Dick. Dad says he won't. He's goin' away. Watch Dick. Good-bye. Lena."

The two women examined the scrawl carefully. Wereroa at last, impatient with the puzzle, threw the paper aside and said: "I don't see that it concerns us. There are no grandfathers here, and I'm not acquainted with any one named Dick."

"Believe me there is something more in this than you suppose," responded Angelica, and her serious countenance revealed the anxiety she felt. Without pause she related to Wereroa what she knew of Tysford's intercourse with Foyle Shane in London, of his interest in little Lena, and of his generous provision for the return of Shane and his family to Australia. The Maori woman listened intently. Her eyes blazed threateningly and her bosom heaved rapidly, and she inquired in a thick whisper: "What do you think?"

"I don't know what to think. But if I have to employ a detective to find him and bring him to me, I'll make Dick Gowanlock tell me before nightfall what it means. I'm sure some danger threatens Pitsligo Tysford."

"Danger!" and the hand of Wereroa involuntarily sought the ivory handle of a superb revolver, whose silvery barrel was twice as long as that of an ordinary

Digitized by Google

pistol, and seemed like the tube of a small rifle, which was secured to her side and concealed by the picturesque draping of a light silken shawl. "Danger!" she repeated.

"Yes; and I fear a very real danger. Tell me," and Angelica spoke only half audibly, "has he any enemies?"

Without hesitancy, but with savageness and bitterness in the tones of her subdued voice, the Maori woman answered: "Yes—the Larrikins!"

Without knowing it Wereroa in mentioning that name of terror had touched the real source of Lena's warning and of their own perturbed misgivings and alarms.

When Dick Gowanlock had struck the trail of Orlop Youtsay and had taken passage on an Australian bound steamer in pursuit, he was not displeased to find that Shane and his family were returning home by the same boat. The two men during the voyage became intimate and friendly, and spent many hours together talking on various congenial topics, and that of secret societies was not among the least to receive attention. The good Sergeant expatiated on the rank and honours he had attained in various magnanimous orders, and dwelt at length on the beauty of their rituals. The constant iteration of their advantages and achievements came to pall on the amiability of Shane, and one day more to tease his companion than for anything else, he retorted: "You've climbed high: but really you'd learn more and you'd feel more bewildering sensations were you to join the Larrikins of Australia than are possible in any or all of these played out old world societies."

"The Larrikins!" replied Dick disdainfully, "why, what a common name; why, every order I've joined has either been 'sublime,' 'puissant,' or 'ineffable.' The Larrikins, who are they, I would like to know!"

"If you would, I'll introduce you to the Black Push in Melbourne."

Sergeant Dick did not forget the promise, and the night after their arrival in Australia, he insisted that

Digitized by Google

Foyle Shane should be as good as his word. But Shane manifested considerable reluctance, and sought to dissuade him from trying to gain admission into a Push, or lodge, of the Larrikins. He portrayed the initiatory solemnities in blood-curdling language, and informed him that the vows were of the most uncompromising and awful character. Portions of his description were unmistakably correct, but he failed to inform Dick that the membership was restricted to the sons of the old convict class, and that every applicant had at least to be represented as being the descendant of a "lab." Neither was he careful to explain that this society was in no sense histrionic, and was not given to parade and dramatic degrees.

Whatever else it might be, it was thoroughly real; its oaths were not mere pretences, its curses meant just what they said, and its deeds, even its crimes, were actually committed, and were not the simulation and mummery of acts which honourable men would not commit. The Sergeant naturally supposed that this order was like others in which he held membership, and in which he had represented princes, soldiers, philosophers and mighty rulers, in which he had also bound himself by terrible penalties to be faithful, impliedly pledging himself to inflict the same penalty on any brother who should forget his vows. But these theatric proceedings he knew were at bottom only fictions, a kind of play in which parts were assumed, and which amused the actors for awhile, and which practically ceased to interest as soon as the prompter—some right worthy puissant generalissimo in the East—should ring down the curtain. But Dick was made acquainted with a new kind of secret society when he was initiated into the famous Black Push of Melbourne.

The morning after the gruesome skull and cross-bones ceremonies the two men, fatigued and haggard-looking, breakfasted together. Lena and her mother were with them. The meal was eaten in silence, but near its close the old soldier could contain himself no longer, and exclaimed:

Digitized by Google

"The rummest go I ever saw! Why, the king hadn't a crown on, and the fellows called him 'Sir,' or 'Him,' and didn't give the royal title. There were no banners, no altar, no aprons,—my! the whole thing was the queerest mix I ever got into. When I was leaving the Push 'him' asked me to examine the book I had signed. I did so; and read a list of burglaries and murders—all particulars given—which I had certified over my signature to having committed. I smiled, 'him' grinned, and then I nodded pleasantly that 'him' might see I understood that these robberies and murders were intended in a mystical and speculative sense."

Shane's face wore a grave expression, but he did not remind the neophyte then that there was nothing speculative about Larrikinism, that these crimes had been actually committed, and that the signed confession was a means of compromising the new member. The Irishman said never a word. The Sergeant resumed:

"That 'him's' an odd chap. When we were a parting he put a paper in my hand with a lot o' names written down, and whispered: 'You will work with these 'ere comrades in putting Pitsligo Tysford out of the way.' Well, I looks at him, and he looks at me, and blow me if I can quite make out what it's all about."

"I also received a notice," quietly, though gloomily, answered Shane, "and it means that we are ordered to kill Pitsligo Tysford."

"Kill!" shouted little Lena, "why, you won't hurt granddad, will you?"

"There, there, Lena dear, you mustn't talk. I'd forgot you were in the room. Granddad's safe enough. Sergeant Dick, let's go out, take a turn and a smoke."

After the men had walked about a bit, silently puffing their pipes, Dick resumed the subject of their conversation.

"Of course, this command to kill has a mystical sense which I don't understand—and dash my old boots if I can see why the name of Tysford is brought into the ritual."

Digitized by Google

"Dick," replied Shane, "when I first proposed to get you admitted to the Black Push I was joking, making fun of your love of secret societies, and I'd no thought of your taking me at my word. But when I saw that you did so, I told you the truth about the Larrikins, but the closer I kept to facts the more excited you became. Well, I decided to gratify you. You'd made up your mind that it was all a farce and I hoped it would turn out a farce—but it has gone the other way. I tell you again the Larrikins are not a play-acting lot. They mean business and they mean it hard every time. This Tysford they hate, because he was one of those who opposed the English government when the government wanted to land convicts in Melbourne, and because, when two Pushes were having a fight in Allen's Wood on the borders of Leichhardt, not far from Sydney, he set the police on them. They count him their enemy, and they have chosen a band to put him to death, and we're both honoured with commissions in that select company."

As the truth at last penetrated the wool-gathering cranium of Sergeant Dick, his eyes became fixed and staring, his under jaw fell and his mouth opened wide, and his clenched fists sank deep into his pockets. He was amazed, horrified. Secret societies that had been to him the source of so much delight and had contributed so much to his self-esteem, had proven at last a stumbling block and a snare, had introduced him into the fellowship of criminals and had degraded him to their level. For a while he remained lost in the contemplation of his stupidity, and then, with a violent wrench, as though breaking away from what had terrorized him, he dashed his clay pipe, which he had clutched in his hand and which had nearly set fire to his nether garments, to the ground, and blurted out:

"I'll be d——d if I raise a finger against Mr. Tysford, and as he's in Australia I'll warn him and save him from you and all the Larrikins in this God-forsaken country."

"There, now, you needn't fire up against me. I'm not going into this killing business any more than you are.

Digitized by Google

Warn him, if you can. As for me, I must get out. Were I to remain and not act as ordered, some fine morning I'd be found kicked to death, and I'd rather not die that way. I'm off. To-morrow I'll take the wife and Lena and set out for Cape Colony. When the war ends there will be plenty of Boer lands to buy cheap, and there ain't any Larrikins there, and there on the veldt a chap won't have many chances of going wrong"—his wonderfully lithe fingers wriggled—" and there they ain't likely to ask bamboozling questions about a fellow's past."

The two men drew closer together, and as they walked they conversed earnestly. Plans were formed, resolutions shaped and confidences exchanged.

During the day, that Lena's mother might be relieved from care, the child was taken by her father to accompany him and the soldier in their further wanderings. Shane knew where Pitsligo had his lodging, and he desired to show the house to Dick Gowanlock. It was while they were viewing the premises that Lena made her desperate dash to see granddad. Her effort quite flustrated her father who was at the moment explaining that wise diplomacy might be able to ascertain from some one in the house a clew that would lead to the discovery of Tysford. Hurriedly regaining possession of his child, he moved quickly from the scene as he was anxious to avoid drawing attention to himself. Next morning the men had a final interview, and Dick took his departure from the house, saying farewell to the family about to set out for South Africa, and hearing Lena's whispered entreaty, " Don't kill granddad "—and for the first time felt keenly his loneliness in Melbourne. He had not, however, proceeded far when he realized that he was being followed. He looked behind and then continued on his way. The footsteps gained on him. He quickened his pace. So did his pursuer. A hand was laid upon his shoulder and he stopped.

" Are you Sergeant Dick Gowanlock?"

" Yes, and who are you?"

" I'm a detective."

Digitized by Google

"The devil you are, and what do you want with me?" And Dick half made a grand hailing sign of distress, but some painful recollection restrained him and it was not finished.

"Oh, there's nothing wrong. Mr. Emden didn't have your address and he employed me to search you up, and it's been pretty hard work. Here's a letter for you."

Dick read that Orlop Youtsay had sent to the steamboat office for assistance as he was stranded for lack of money in a sailors' boarding house. Also,—and this took his breath away—that Miss Rowallan was in Melbourne at the Hotel Dootigala, and was so anxious to see him that she had empowered him to engage a detective for the purpose of finding him and bringing him to her without delay. Dick nodded to the detective and named the hotel, and the officer promptly led the way. Reaching his destination, the old soldier by himself alone, was shown up to a reception-room, and there he was kindly greeted by the Mistress of Rowallan, whose manner evinced deep-seated anxiety. The only other person in the apartment was a tall, handsome Maori woman.

"Sergeant Dick, do you know where Mr. Tysford is?" The veteran shook his head.

"I have reason for fearing that he is in danger," Angelica continued. The veteran nodded.

"Ah! you seem to know. Tell me what peril threatens?"

"The Larrikins."

The mention of the name had a startling effect on the Maori woman, and she joined Angelica in pressing the old soldier to tell all that he knew. His story was soon reated, and when he had ended Wereroa spoke:

"We will save him. I know whither he has gone and I am acquainted with his haunts. He shall not be crushed by these villains. But we must leave the city at once—this very night."

That night they left Melbourne for New Zealand by the way of Sydney, and they took with them the sobered Orlop Youtsay, who had ample opportunity before the

Digitized by Google

long journey was over of learning how reprehensibly and absurdly he had been acting, and how outrageously he had wronged Pitsligo Tysford,—the man who had befriended him and who had turned out to be none other than his dear wife's brother.

Digitized by Google

II

DEATH DIVIDES NOT WHAT LOVE UNITES

"DO not fear, Naoroji, we are not lost. Map and compass have alike failed me if we are not on the right road."

"I do not doubt you, Sahib, but this is such a desolate and savage place. Hell seems to be ready at every step to swallow us up," and the Hindu shuddered. The Master of Rowallan and his servant, both travel-stained, clad in the lightest of summer apparel, paused wearily in the hot stifling atmosphere and silently contemplated the terror-inspiring scene.

All around them were signs of nature's strain, struggle and convulsion as she had writhed in the fierce clutches of pent up but ravaging fires. The entire region was marked, scarred and corrugated by the uncontrollable violence of volcanic forces. Large portions of the ground were rent and torn by huge cracks and frightful crevices from which clouds of smoke and sulphur fumes streamed forth; and at irregular intervals there were yet more appalling chasms, bordered with ferns and mosses, whose treacherous brink crumbled away at the slightest touch. The indurated crust of the earth was prolific with choking and deadly vapours, and it tremblingly vibrated as the molten currents beneath growled and thundered. In the distance were dimly visible flaming mountain peaks, whose beacon fires flashed intermittently above their clothing of eternal snow. Near by and in the centre of the scene a hollow yawning pit enwrapped and shrouded in suffocating mist, excelled in gloomy grandeur every other approach to chaos and death. Giant rocks piled one above the other, irregularly shaped, some flat, some sharp and jutting, all sweltering and moist as with steam-

Digitized by Google

ing perspiration, formed the mouth of a jagged crater, from whose throat reeked warm exhalations, and in whose fathomless depths rolled the tides of a boiling sea.

The very sight of this seething cauldron was appalling, and proximity to it was perilous and bewildering. Yet here and there were traces of adventurous feet that had risked everything in an effort to draw closer to the furious horror, an ambition that could only be gratified when the foot was sure and when care was taken to approach on the side from which the wind drove the blinding and oppressive heated rack and haze.

Rowallan surveyed the panorama thoughtfully, and holding a small piece of parchment in his hand, partly addressing himself and partly speaking to Naoroji, he said: "I have followed the directions. Thus far, I am sure, I have not erred. Landing at Wellington on the North Island, I have crossed Mount Rimutaka, have journeyed from Mangamahoe through the seventy mile bush to Woodville, from thence to Lake Taupo, have sighted the volcanic mountains, Tongariro and Ruapehu, and am now in the neighbourhood of the Wairakei Hot Springs. So far so good. But here the difficulty begins. We are to take our bearings due north in the direction of the Waikato River, and the subterranean chambers with their golden treasures will be found hidden by——" But at this point he was interrupted and looked up from the paper he was scanning.

"Would it not be well for the Master of Rowallan in so wild a land as this to have a guide? Possibly I might serve him."

The sound of the low but distinct voice, plaintive in its softness, startled Rowallan and Naoroji, and their eyes rested on the frayed, faded and threadbare figure of a man, old and feeble, whose long tattered hair and matted beard almost entirely obscured his features, and whose form was partly hidden by a great rock under the shadow of which he was seated on a worn and battered knapsack. Never having seen him but once in such a plight—at Euston Railway Station—and never for a moment dream-

Digitized by Google

ing that he had left London, Powrie Rowallan failed to recognize Pitsligo Tysford in the person of the withered and beggarly intruder.

"By what means you have ascertained my name I cannot divine. But judging from appearances you are better fitted to play the part of a mendicant or foot-pad than that of a guide."

"But it will not do always to judge by appearances," came the retort; "for there are often those who seem to be gentlemen and men of honour, and who turn out to be—otherwise."

"Ah, have I met an Australian Diogenes?" sneeringly inquired Rowallan. "But I trust his lantern has occasionally served him to discover an honest man."

"If it has, it certainly has not succeeded in doing so this day and in the Wairakei region."

Amazed at this cool impertinence Powrie moved as though to lessen the distance between himself and the tattered stranger, but was deterred by an ugly rift in the treacherous soil which effectually separated them from each other. Pausing on the brink he replied: "I do not know whether you mean to insult me, or whether you are only stupid as well as poor, but I insist on your telling me how you came to be acquainted with my name."

"Look!"

"Look? At what?"

"At me. Harder; and though you seem to have forgotten me, I think a close scrutiny will disclose to you Pitsligo Tysford."

"Pitsligo Tysford! And what could have brought you so far from London, and what could have induced you to penetrate this howling wilderness?"

"Yourself. Not wholly so, but largely so. We left much unsaid when we were together in London. What was not spoken then I desire to say here and now. I fully expected to meet you somewhere near Wairakei Springs searching for an important trail, for I suspected that you had in your possession a diagram which, with several other articles, was stolen from me in England."

Digitized by Google

"Weigh your words, sir," answered Rowallan sternly. "Do you mean to insinuate, do you dare to charge?"

"I do not accuse; but the paper is in your hand—that is all. Where the diamonds are I do not ask. But grasping my property as you do, and as your own wife and child are concerned in what it represents, I claim the right to a few minutes of your leisure—for here we are not busy, and the gold will not disappear from rock or river as we talk—and I desire that our interview shall be private."

Powrie Rowallan realized in the presence of this unruffled man, with his subdued voice and his tranquil and undemonstrative manner, that some undefinable crisis was imminent in his own life. He addressed a few words in Hindu to Naoroji, bidding him withdraw; he then leaned against a stone, and prepared to listen to Pitsligo across the narrow but dangerous gulf that divided them. When they were by themselves, and as Naoroji was crawling, slipping, and writhing along among volcanic débris and abrupt rents in the earth, seemingly intent on working his way round the Hot Springs, Pitsligo began the conversation.

"Do you remember Sir Murchison Carfrae and the robbery of 1852, and the wretchedness it entailed on an innocent youth?"

"Oh, yes, I have a vague recollection of something of the kind. But, then, that was a very long time ago—remote, ancient history—and as it did not matter much to me it has almost escaped my memory."

"Indeed," answered Pitsligo mournfully, and with a touch of scorn. "And it did not matter much to you? Ah me! But there was one soul to whom it was a day of judgment and to whom it brought the sentence of undeserved banishment to outer darkness. It meant everything, and it meant bitterly, and disastrously, and cruelly, and wrongfully, and woefully to him."

"Yes, now that you speak I do recall something of his story. There were certain individuals who insisted that the young man was not guilty, but he himself gave their

Digitized by Google

good-natured confidence the lie by escaping from prison. But whether justly accused or not, it turned out a capital thing for him. He had no money, he had no standing; and an exalted personage, morbidly sympathetic, befriended him, aided his mother and sister, and I have heard that the culprit died somewhere in these parts of the earth, not drowned as had been reported—full of wealth if not full of honours."

Rowallan spoke contemptuously, and as though only languidly interested in the subject. Tysford eyed him searchingly, and discovering neither compunction nor commiseration, he replied with unusual firmness:

"Rowallan, you know more than you pretend. You know who committed the robbery; you know why the innocent man was deported; and you know that the guilty has never fully prospered, that he has verified our old Gaelic saying—'*Ni droch dhuine dan da fèin*,'—for he, too, has been a wanderer, suspected of crimes in one place, fleeing from justice in another, practicing nefarious arts in another, until at last he has gone so far as to rob his own wife and child, or, I ought to have said, attempted to do so, by substituting a poor, vagrant girl in the place of his daughter in the hope that he might obtain control of an inheritance—a scheme which not only miscarried, but which led to the suspicion that for dark reasons of his own he had murdered the young woman who was either his dupe or accomplice. All this you know; and you know that the man is not rich, and is now plotting to carry off treasures on which he has no claim, as though after a long succession of failures he could at the last reverse the eternal laws of right and coin enduring wealth out of rapine and injustice. No, Powrie Rowallan, no, '*Ni droch dhuine dan da fèin*.'"

The two old men, confronting each other as they did, by this time had lost much of their coolness and self-restraint. Tysford had waxed indignant as he had reviewed the career of the evil-doer, ever conspiring and never succeeding, and as he closed making a personal

Digitized by Google

application of what he had said. Rowallan winced, changed colour, and at a white heat of passionate rage exclaimed: "I am not certain at what your distempered fancy aims, though I am not insensible to your insinuations. But let me tell you no one has a right to question me or to set himself up above me as my judge."

"And yet I have that right," retorted Pitsligo, "the right of the wronged to protest against the wrong, the right of a brother to defend a sister who has been maligned and forsaken, of an uncle to guard the well-being of his niece—the right of Dawney Macgillivray, after all these years, to say to Powrie Rowallan that he is a cold-blooded and dastardly villain!" As he uttered these words he rose from his seat, and pointed an accusing finger in the direction of Rowallan, and Rowallan, so amazed by this self-disclosure that he had not taken in the full significance of the denunciation, gasped for breath and automatically repeated: "Dawney Macgillivray, Dawney Macgillivray—what, can the dead return to life? can it be?"

"Yes, Powrie Rowallan, many things can be and are which to the guilty soul seem impossible. But, hear me! Dawney Macgillivray has not emerged from his long oblivion for the purpose of seeking vengeance on the man whom his sister married. He is here, encompassed with infirmities and heart-sick and sorrowful, to beseech Rowallan, for the sake of Zinnia and for the sake of Angelica, to stop short even now in his wretched career, and let the past be buried. I have more than enough for all, and I am ready to surrender every possession I have, even to leave unvindicated my traduced and tarnished name, and quietly and unnoticed, when the end shall come, slip into the shadows of the unseen, if Powrie Rowallan will only return to the paths of rectitude, will devote his talents to some worthy cause, and will thus avert from wife and child the consciousness of shame whenever they think on him and his deeds. There is no need for explanations, no need for recriminations, no need for bitterness and reproach. Let memory be cruci-

Digitized by Google

fied; let honour be revived; let the dead bury its dead; and, having learned experience from the blighted years, let life be undertaken afresh with honest aims and ennobling hopes. This is the message from the grave of Dawney Macgillivray."

Stupefied and maddened beyond endurance by the persuasive and conciliatory speech of Pitsligo, Rowallan in a paroxysm of fury, like Mount Tarawera in eruption, when molten lava pours down its quaking sides and terrible explosions burst from its flaming throat, clenched his fists, waved his arms, tramped up and down along the margin of the uncertain crevice, and belched forth invectives and fierce defiance.

"Witling, imbecile, scaramouch, dullard fresh from Bœotia, half clown, half knave, who has been living in disguise, afraid for nearly fifty years to own his identity, self-exiled from his native country and slinking out of sight in this land where he poses as a beggar. I hated you when you were a youth, I hate you still. To think of your patronizing me, offering me your bounty and protection, and talking to me as a preacher to a sinner, and daring to set yourself above me as though you were immaculate! Away with your cant, your pretense and humbug. Do what you like, expose me if you will, tell your miserable lies, make yourself out a martyr. I defy you, I spurn and loathe you; and I give you warning, if you stand in the way of my present desires, if you attempt to prevent my enriching myself, I will sweep you from my path, I will crush you beneath my feet—I will strike you down in a moment when you think not and when there is none to help."

His voice had grown louder and louder as he spoke, and his features darker and more distorted, his manner had become more wild and threatening, and he seemed, as he bent forward over the chasm at his feet, as though he would clutch at his foe and rend him without mercy. As he raved and stamped, the lithe, supple figure of the Hindu glided noiselessly round the rock which had sheltered Pitsligo. Intuitively he interpreted the vengeful

Digitized by Google

bitterness in his master's heart, and with a sudden spring, like a panther from its lair, leaped upon Pitsligo and bore him unresistingly to the hard ground. But though taken by surprise and prone on his back, the old man attempted to shake himself free from his swift, agile and nimble assailant.

The struggle could not but prove unequal. Age was no match for youth, and stiffened joints and feeble limbs could not contend with elasticity and sinewy strength. The two men grappled, rolled together over the corrugated soil, and fought and struck blindly at each other, and twisted, writhed and agonized. Naoroji, having been under more than once, and having received some contusions in the rough and brutal fight, at last succeeded in gaining the mastery, and placing his knee on the chest of the prostrate Tysford mercilessly stabbed and slashed him with the skean dhu which he had stolen on the night in London when he had rifled the garments of the millionaire and which he had carried concealed about his person ever since. The wounded man sank back exhausted, blood on his face, blood on his bared breast, and blood on his poor hands. The Hindu, himself bespattered with blood, and holding aloft the blood-stained weapon, disentangled himself from his victim, and stood panting, deliriously proud of his victory. Rowallan, who had unmoved viewed the cowardly assault, did not welcome the consummation of his real wishes with glad acclaim, so inconsistent is human nature, but was speechless, and turned his head aside that his eyes might not see the pitiable spectacle.

So absorbed was he with his own reflections, and so dazed and elated was Naoroji, that neither of them heard the sound of approaching footsteps, nor observed a Maori woman push rapidly in advance of her companions. Her sensitive ear had caught some distance away the sickening noise of deadly struggle, and she had quickened her pace. Arriving on the scene Wereroa at a glance took in the terrible situation. There lay her benefactor, her deliverer, gashed, bleeding, motionless as

Digitized by Google

in the embrace of death, and there before her stood the dark-skinned demon who had basely smitten him down. His back was towards her, but she could see his cheek, and fancied it was flushed with the sense of triumph, and poignantly realizing her loss, she waxed desperate. Swifter than thought, and without a word of warning she threw herself on Naoroji from behind, and seizing his neck violently drew his head backwards, and tightened to suffocation her hold upon his throat. He let go the skean, extended his arms, and struggled to be free. His contortions witnessed to the excruciating pain he suffered, but she held him as in a vise, and relaxed not at all the work of strangulation. Her eyes flashed, her white teeth gleamed between her parted lips seemingly ready to tear and rend, her bosom heaved and quivered with intense wrath, as her fingers clutched more fiercely, and her nails buried themselves more deeply in the blackened and lacerated flesh. Suddenly the Hindu sank from her grasp, limp and helpless, almost unconscious, but not dead. Then Wereroa, with strength that was akin to the superhuman, lifted him up in her arms, and bore him without faltering and without hesitancy along a narrow difficult path in the direction of the boiling springs of Wairakei. Reaching the brink, on the side comparatively cleared of the steaming vapours by the wind, and where a rock rises prominently above all the others, affording a barrier of protection from the abyss, she cried out stridently and frantically—"*Ka whawhai tonu, aké, aké, aké!*"

Rowallan had been roused by the fierce onslaught and was rendered incapable of action when he saw that the avènger was a woman. Her companions, also, who had reached the spot just as she set out with her burden, were petrified by fear. But when she stood on the edge of the seething cauldron, and her voice sounded over the Hindu as the voice of doom, almost simultaneously Rowallan commanded her to refrain from her madness, her friends entreated her to withdraw from her perilous position, and Orlop Youtsay, more accustomed to uneven

Digitized by Google

ground than the others, stepped towards her, calling: "Belay there, avast, heave to!"

"This is the answer of the Maori to friend and foe alike—he must die, he shall die."

Planting her feet more firmly on the treacherous ground, and swaying her body to and fro, by an effort of combined skill and strength, she hurled Naoroji, who was rapidly regaining consciousness, into the troubled and boiling depths, exclaiming as she did so—"*Ka whawhai tonu, aké, aké, aké!*"

Prevented from reaching her by the dividing crevice in the earth Rowallan, horrified by what he had witnessed, and making demonstrations of violence, shouted back to her wild threats of vengeance. The Maori woman turned and confronted him, and deliberately released from her girdle the long-barrelled revolver she carried. Her composure had returned. Quietly she raised it and brought Rowallan and its muzzle within range of each other, and her finger was about to touch the delicate trigger when Angelica beseechingly interposed.

"Wereroa! I entreat you—he is my brother."

The pistol was lowered. The Maori woman commandingly signalled Rowallan to depart, which he did precipitately and ignominiously, and then she retraced her steps and came to where the little group of friends were tenderly ministering to Pitsligo Tysford.

They had placed a worn plaid under his body, and his old pack beneath his head, and Sergeant Dick, who had had some experience in army hospitals, was attempting to stanch his wounds.

Their handkerchiefs soon proved inadequate; and though afterwards the little old lady retired without a word of explanation among the rocks and returned with a supply of linen which looked as though it had been torn into strips from an underskirt, the oozing blood could not be stayed. It became increasingly manifest that he could not long survive, and that it would serve no purpose to try and move him. This was a sad

Digitized by Google

outcome to the hopes of the entire party. They had landed at Auckland, had journeyed by the way of Oxford to Ohinemutu and from thence by easy stages to the neighbourhood of Tysford's subterranean treasure house, familiar to Wereroa. Not finding him there, and concluding that he was coming from the southern approach, they had left their conveyance and had undertaken to walk through a portion of the volcanic region trusting that they might not miss him. And they had found him, but alas! only speechless and dying—only in time to utter words of love and pray for him as his spirit entered the valley of the shadow. They spoke in whispers, and could scarcely speak for weeping.

Wereroa drew near to where Pitsligo lay, and sat down on the ground beside him. Gently, as with a touch of a mother, she drew his shaggy head towards her, and rested it upon her arm and the soft support of her lap. She pushed back the straggling hair, bent over and reverently kissed his forehead, and then taking from the hand of Dick a flask she placed it to his lips. Either the smell of it or the change in his position roused him from his stupour, and turning his face from the stimulant, he murmured: "Angelica!"

"Here am I, Dawney," she answered.

A shadow passed over the noble features of the Maori woman. But she said nothing. She only tried to render his position more comfortable.

"Here am I, Dawney." And Angelica knelt as close as possible to him, leaned sufficiently forward for him to see her face and took his hand in hers.

The sun was declining and the sky was tinged with purple, crimson, blue and orange tints, and the atmosphere was surcharged with a soft, tremulous, golden light.

"I am here, Dawney. Across the great sea I have voyaged, and from point to point in this far distant land and over the rough waters to this island in search of you. Listen, Dawney"—for his eyelids drooped—"I came to take you back home, to tell you that we love and honour

Digitized by Google

you; that we mean you shall have justice done you—that whosoever suffers shame you shall no longer do so, and to tell you, also, Dawney, dear, that, if ever you doubted your Angelica, you have wrongfully doubted, for she has always loved and trusted—although she has herself been perplexed and has not always known in what direction the path of duty lay."

The rugged, furrowed features of the dying man were either touched by the sunlight without or by a new light within, for they glistened with a strange radiance. He falteringly replied:

"My eyes are growing dim, everything is blurred. Is Angelica, my Angelica, here?"

"Yes."

"Yes, your honour," blubbered Youtsay, "and Orlop is here, a picaroon of a seaman, who opened ports and blazed away without first turning telescope to see the colours, and fired on his own convoy. But he has heard the yarn. Miss Angelica has told him all—all about you, all about Zinnia—and may I be"—the expletive was gulped down in time—"if I think much more of myself than a swab. I'm a foul old bark, whose decks need holystoning. But don't bear me ill will, your honour. I bear myself enough of that. Yes, Orlop's here, and if you're to go out with this tide he'd gladly go with you; and Sergeant Dick is here, or," missing the warrior, "he was, and has slipped anchor and gone in search of the ship's surgeon."

A smile lit up the wan face of Pitsligo. He did not fully comprehend, but the soothing sense of receiving that which his soul had long thirsted for comforted and consoled. His lips moved once more: "Yes, yes, but where's Angelica?"

"Here, Dawney, holding your dear hand." He pressed hers in return with that pressure which only love can give and which only love can understand. "But Dawney, it may be we have only met to part. Life is always uncertain and you're wounded. Dawney, dear, are you prepared to meet your God?"

Digitized by Google

His faculties were clearer now; the flickering embers were reviving before they should expire forever. He spoke painfully and slowly, but he spoke: "I've met God every day for over seventy years. Why fear to meet Him on the morrow—either in this world or another?"

"Yet, Dawney, would you not better pray—'Lord remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom'?"

With indescribable scorn, which disturbed the serenity of his countenance and quivered in his voice, he replied:

"That was a thief's prayer, and I never was a thief. Not that."

"Then in your own way, Dawney, call upon your mother's God to save you."

"Ah, but mother's God makes all prayer useless by decrees which no earthly power can set aside."

"But His own power can—Dawney, only pray for grace."

He lapsed into silence. Whether his thoughts were busy with the unseen world and with his spiritual needs, could not be discovered by any outward sign. The pallor that betokens death spread over his face and his brow was wet with clammy sweat, his hands were colder and his fingers stiff, and a purplish colour was appearing beneath the nails. He began to wander in his mind, and in broken sentences to talk of days gone by, of prison cells, of sinking ships, of suffocating waters, of weary wanderings, of bloody strife, of fire in the bush, of threats and dangers, and of money, money, money, "so much of it, so useless;" and he sought out the jewelled locket with the faded, yellow treasure it contained and tried to press it to his lips.

"Ah me!" he whispered, "so lonely, so lonely—and I always thought she would come to me from some other world if not in this—but, no, I am alone, quite alone—so lonely."

Wereroa bent her head downwards and in tender accents said: "Not so, sir, Wereroa is with you and will never leave you."

Digitized by Google

"Angelica!" was the only response that came from his lips. The Mistress of Rowallan drew yet nearer to him and with sobs and sighs, appealed to him as best she could: "Dawney, I am here. I have told you that I've traversed half the globe to see you. I know I'm not young and fair as the Angelica you knew. My feet have grown heavy with the weight of years, my hair has turned white with the snows of many winters, my eyes have been dimmed by the tears of sorrowful disappointments, and the lightness and gladness of girlhood have fled from my heart; but I'm the same to you, loyal, true and ready to sacrifice all for you. I love you as I loved you in the long ago, love you better and with a love refined by sorrow and exalted by the knowledge of your nobleness."

The sun was now setting fast, and its rays were almost on a line with the little group, already bathing each figure in a soft, rosy light.

"How beautiful, how beautiful,—yes, I see her——" But his eyes were beginning to be glassy and staring, and the outward world was becoming to him more and more a haze and blur. He drew the form of Angelica nearer, so near that their bodies touched. "I knew she would come. How fair she is—fair and sweet as the morning. Her hair is raven and lustrous still, her smile as winning, her step as light, her voice as musical and low, her face as lovely, her movements as graceful as—in the long ago—and I'm decayed and aged! Ah me! And what shall I do now?"

"Don't talk that way, Dawney, for I am no longer young. My hair is white, and I am faded, withered, old——"

"I see," he continued, only more feebly, "through the eternity of fifty desolate years, and I see her—as she was—as she is, as she must be forever. She has been obscured and hidden from me. There was a saintly, motherly woman, too, but she wasn't my girl-love. I wasn't deceived. I've waited, waited, waited, and despaired, but she has come at last. She is mine now.

Digitized by Google

Strange that she has not altered—and it must be half a century nearly—where am I? Why is she so young and I so old? Now that she is mine she must explain. She shall never leave me—the Kincardines shall not part us. Ah! I see—love never changes, and what love loves is fixed and immortal."

"O, Dawney, Dawney, think of something else. You are nearing the Great White Throne."

He did not hear her, he did not see her, but he drew her head down close to his own, and her faded face to his, and kissed her withered cheek. That was all.

The sun was almost gone. There they lay in each other's arms, radiant and glorified by the transforming iridescence of the vanishing day.

Suddenly he turned round and raised his head and gazed into the golden splendour of the setting sun.

"Ah! I see Him now."

"Who, Dawney, who?"

"Why, the only One—He whom you have trusted."

"The Christ?"

"Yes—how radiant, how pure and lovely!"

"Trust Him, Dawney; it is not too late."

With a deep sigh he murmured, "I believe, help Thou my unbelief."

"Thank God!"

"But how like!"

"Like whom?"

"Angelica! It is her face, her look; but through the softness of her beauty there shines the holy grandeur of the divine."

"Oh! Dawney," Angelica entreated in broken accents, "do not connect the earthy with the heavenly!"

"I understand it now. God incarnated Himself in humanity to save the world. And now He dwells in the men and women whom we love, and Himself through them draws us to the unending and blessed life. I see. And I thought He had forsaken me!"

"No, Dawney, He never would and never will."

"When she has been with me in the wilderness He

Digitized by Google

was watching over me in her. Ah, me! how wonderful —how strange—and now He is near! My Lord and my God."

And he clutched convulsively at the frail form of the woman at his side and sank back with his head once more pillowed on Wereroa's lap.

Again he spoke, but his words were indistinct to those who strained their ears to hear: "The scent of the purple heather is in the air—I will wander under the beech-trees and follow the Esk. She will come to her window and I will tell her that I am waiting. Why does she tarry so long? Well, I must be going, the Master beckons me, beyond the Pentlands, beyond the Tweed, beyond the seas,—beyond, and yet beyond; but I shall still wait—ever wait—for thee, Angelica."

The sun sank with a plunge beneath the horizon, and the shimmering, luminous atmosphere alone remained, soon to be swallowed up in the gathering dusk. Dawney lay still and dead. The brief day of earthly life was ended; but its after-glow, the after-glow of its gentleness, unselfishness and loyalty to love survived, and would never be forgotten even when the night of sorrow, trial and death should darken the way of those who had loved and trusted him.

Over the faces touching each other, of the living and the dead—of Angelica and Dawney—fell the loosened long, black hair of the Maori woman, like a funeral pall, and with the plaintive sigh of a stricken heart she moaned:

"And never a word of comfort or farewell for poor Wereroa!"

Digitized by Google

RALPH CONNOR'S
CRISP WESTERN TALES

100th 1,000

Glengarry School Days. A Tale of Early Days in Glengarry. Illustrated, 12mo, Cloth, $1.25.

"Wonderfully vivid and realistic.—Indeed it is a fair question whether the author has not given us in this book some bits not equalled elsewhere."—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

160th 1,000

The Man from Glengarry. A Tale of the Ottawa. 12mo, Cloth, $1.50.

"Bears the unmistakable mark of power."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

"There is pathos, subtle wit, humor, quaint character drawing. . . . Life, warmth, color are all here."—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

200th 1,000

The Sky Pilot. A Tale of the Foothills. 12mo, Cloth, $1.25.

"Ralph Connor's 'Black Rock' was good, but 'The Sky Pilot' is better. His style, fresh, crisp and terse, accords with the Western life, which he well understands."—*The Outlook.*

400th 1,000

Black Rock. A Tale of the Selkirks. 12mo, Cloth, $1.25.

Popular Edition 50 cents, Special Edition 75 cents.

"With perfect wholesomeness, with entire fidelity, with truest pathos, with freshest humor, he has delineated character, has analyzed motives and emotions, and has portrayed life."
—*St. Louis Globe Democrat.*

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
NEW YORK CHICAGO
TORONTO LONDON EDINBURGH

Digitized by Google

THE LATEST FICTION
THE INSPIRING SORT

Janet Ward. A Daughter of the Manse. By MARGARET E. SANGSTER. $1.50

A college girls story written in the interest of the girl of to-day. It is to show young women their opportunities and to indicate how any true-hearted girl may walk scathless through all dangers that beset her path.

Fool's Gold. By ANNIE RAYMOND STILLMAN. $1.50.

A striking novel. A romance of exceptional power in which plot and action yield a large tribute to the strong purpose of the book.

Love Never Faileth. An Emotion Touched By Moralities. By CARNEGIE SIMPSON. $1.25

"Strong in its moral tone, uplifting in its purity, and remarkably entertaining as a romance of the affections."—*James M. Ludlow.*

"A bright, straightforward love story, full of youth and sweetness."—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

Aunt Abby's Neighbors. By ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON. Freely decorated. $1.00

To the thousands of readers who know "Fishin' Jimmy" and all other remarkable creations of Mrs. Slosson's genius, it is enough to announce a new story from her deft and subtle pen.

The Little Green God. A Satire on American Hinduism.
By CAROLINE ATWATER MASON. 75c.

By the author of "The Lily of France." Pungent, witty, humorous, pathetic and terribly in earnest and serious in meaning. This little book will make a sensation.

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Digitized by Google

THE LATEST FICTION THE INSPIRING SORT

Those Black Diamond Men. A Tale of the Anthrax Valley. By WILLIAM F. GIBBONS. Illustrated. $1.50.

"It is a series of dramatic human scenes, sometimes with thrilling incidents, sometimes of tragic intensity, sometimes touched with humor."—*The Outlook.*

By Order of the Prophet. A Tale of the Occupation of the Great Salt Lake Basin. By ALFRED H. HENRY. Illus. $1.50.

True to history, founded upon actual incident, forceful in the telling and strong in the depiction of character, it is a worthy contribution to the literature of the making of the West.

A Chinese Quaker. An Unfictitious Novel. By NELLIE BLESSING-EYSTER. Illus. $1.50.

The title of this book is the poet-philanthropist Whittier's own phrase and itself forecasts a most romantic story—a record literally unique. Simply as a novel it is entertaining.

Two Wilderness Voyagers. A True Story of Indian Life. By FRANKLIN WELLES CALKINS. 12mo, cloth, $1.50.

"This romance of the Northwest graphically depicts the exciting adventures of escape and wandering, the drama of the great wilderness with its storms and floods."

My Host the Enemy, and Other Tales of the Northwest. By FRANKLIN WELLES CALKINS. Illustrated. 12mo, cloth, $1.50.

"As narratives of actual adventure they demonstrate anew the fact that truth is certainly stranger than fiction."—*The Outlook.*

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Digitized by Google

TALES OF THE NORTH BY EGERTON R. YOUNG

My Dogs in the Northland.

Profusely illustrated. 12mo, cloth, $1.25 net.

Experiences with Eskimo and St. Bernard dogs, covering years of sledge travel in the frozen wilds of British America. An exciting story in which the marvels of dog instinct, intelligence and strength play the chief part. Mr. Young proves in a most entertaining and instructive way that each dog, just as much as a person, has his own individual character, and must be dealt with accordingly. Terrible perils, wonderful escapes and sudden emergencies mix with the most comical situations.

On the Indian Trail.

Stories of Missionary Experiences among the Cree and the Saulteaux Indians. Stories of Mission. 12mo, cloth, $1.00.

"He has a happy and often amusingly quaint way of describing the incidents and surroundings of frontier life. His cheerful, almost merry, temper, while recounting the devices resorted to in enduring or mastering privations and dangers are stimulating and instructive."—*The Watchman.*

The Apostle of the North, James Evans.

With twenty illustrations by J. E. Laughlin. 12mo, cloth, $1.25.

"A fresh theme is presented here—the life of a missionary in Upper Canada, and the northward regions as far as Athabasca Lake and even beyond. Young people, usually not attracted to missionary literature, will be interested in the book. It is well illustrated."—*The Outlook.*

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google